POEMS

EDWIN DOWNER HELM

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Poems

EDWIN DOWNER HELM

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DEDICATION

To my dearly beloved wife, Harriette Vail Helm, the noble woman, the finished scholar and able critic, the faithful companion, counselor, and friend in all my joys and sorrows, this collection of poems is dedicated as a slight, but earnest token of the love and esteem of the

Author.

January 31, 1892.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Edwin Downer Helm was born in Mount Hope, Orange County, New York, the son of Brewster Helm, a patriot of the War of 1812, and Mary Vance Helm. His grandfather, Thomas Helm, was an officer in the Revolutionary War. His great-grandfather, Brewster Helm, with seven brothers and a few compatriots, came from England to New York "with a grant of land." (The subject of this sketch gathered material for a genealogy of his family but never lived to publish it.)

After completing a preparatory course at the Montgomery Academy, New York, Edwin Downer Helm went West to Illinois and entered Knox College, Galesburg. Returning East, he took a four years' course in Union College, Schenectady, New York, graduating in the class of 1850 with the honor of class poet.

He then entered the College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York City—now the medical department of Columbia University—and graduated therefrom in 1852. For sometime he was an assistant to the distinguished physician and surgeon, Dr. Willard Parker. He named his eldest son in honor of Dr. Parker.

In 1852 he married Harriette Newell Vail of New York—a beautiful woman and a scholar of high literary attainments. (Her family were descendants of Jeremiah Vail, who came from England to Salem, Massachusetts, in 1639.)

In the author's dedication of this book is found

a summary of their relationship in love and unity, in companionship and collaboration, in study and aims, during their long years of married life.

After their marriage they moved West. He practiced medicine for some years in St. Louis and Galesburg; in 1865 he removed to Quincy, Illinois. Here — prophetically — he realized the close relationship between the condition of teeth and health; and, after a course of study, he added dentistry to his practice.

He died in 1893.

As practitioner he was eminent for the careful and interested service rendered his patients, and for gaining their confidence and trust. His weakness in making his bills in proportion to the time and effort spent on his cases—or in collecting them at all—was generally recognized. The two little incidents following are illustrative of these characteristics:—

A patient, after a lapse of twenty years, and after a change of residence from one city to another of both patient and doctor, remembered the success of his old-time family-physician. In his now critical illness, he telegraphed to various cities to locate this doctor. The effort failing, a member of his family was sent to search throughout the state, with the admonition, "Do not return without Dr. Helm, if living. He saved my life once—he will save it again."

The second incident:—The doctor was moving with his family from one field of practice to another. All was in readiness for departure and but an hour lacked for train-time. He decided to employ this time in an effort to collect some unpaid bills. When the hour had almost passed, his wife went anxiously in search of him. She

found him surrounded by an eager crowd of former and would-be patients. These had heard he was leaving and had gathered from all directions, clamoring for a copy of his dysentery-prescription, with which he had been very successful in a recent epidemic. The patients got their prescriptions—the doctor had forgotten his bills.

Dr. Helm loved his family and his friends—his home, his garden, and his books. As a humanitarian he was fond of animals and nearly always was to be seen with one or two loved and loving collies following him as his shadow. His sympathies were with the unpopular, rather than with the conventional popular; and the fighting prowess, with which he was well-endowed, was ever at the service of the oppressed minority.

He was a man for whom nature had done much. Having a mind of philosophical bent, he devoted much time to the study of causes and effects as lighted by reason. In his poems are many indications of deep research into metaphysical subjects, showing earnest longing for truth and light.

Most of his poems were published in periodicals of his day. These were collected by him in an unpublished book, which he dedicated to his wife. There has been expressed by friends a growing desire that this book be published.

As a poet, out of his visions and dreams, he built a spiritual temple, wherein those who loved him might worship at the shrine of freedom, courage, and beauty;—the freedom to search, the courage to do, the beauty of moral and celestial laws. To such thinkers we owe a debt of gratitude; they draw us gently into the beauty that dwells in the heart of the moral law, they inspire us to behold the glory of the celestial law.

The influence of the personality and the creative power Dr. Helm left behind is aptly illustrated in this, his message,

"Of all the millions that now live and breathe
None is so poor, but may and must bequeathe
Something to future time, of good or ill,—
The light each leaves behind will shine on still.

Ever rememb'ring, what you do or try,
'No sun goes down—it lights another sky.'"

POEMS OF PHILOSOPHY

DEATH AND IMMORTALITY

An address delivered before a public evening session of a Missouri State Medical Association.

To the Ladies:

Let not my theme, fair hearer, shock your ear,
Nor give occasion for a sigh or tear;
Though not a theme for pleasure, joy, or mirth,
I trust that it may prove of no less worth.
Our serious thoughts may even prove a gain,
At least our labors will not be in vain,
Providing we, by reasoning, may find
Conclusions that shall satisfy the mind,
How well the facts and claims adduced agree,
Concerning Death and Immortality.

Fain would I weave for you a garland fair
Of bright immortelles, fit for angels' wear,
Or fill your hands and strew your path with flow'rs
Of rarest beauty, culled from fairest bowers,
Like those of famed Cashmere, or Araby,
Or delicate as those the Hybla bee
Culls nectar from, upon Hymettus' side,
Above where flows Scamander's classic tide.
Sweet censers these, full laden with perfume,
Exhaling incense from each bud and bloom,
Which every zephyr kisses as it flies,
Till, drunk with fragrance, it sinks down and dies.
Meet offerings these, for such fair hands as thine;
And gladly would I proffer, were they mine.
But those we doctors cultivate and tend
With watchful care and zealous to defend,

Afford but little I might safely deem
As worthy your acceptance. Though they teem
With bud and bloom of varied scent and hue,
They're not the kind that I would offer you.
Our fairest flowers are always sicklied o'er,
By sad association, gone before,
With human suffering, disease, and pain,
And myriad nameless ills, an endless chain,—
Henbane, nightshade, foxglove, and poppy, too,
Are watered only by Lethean dew;
Emblems unmeet for joyous, happy souls,
As equatorial summer at the poles.

Yet, gladly would I count upon your smiles,
For nothing so effectually beguiles
A weary hour, or tedious one, as when
The ladies smile approvingly on men.
Your kind encouragement and sympathy,
I, therefore, would invoke, although it be
Accorded as a loan or charity;
For judging of the future by the past,
We men must prove your debtors at the last.

To the Men:

As for the men, who kindly choose to hear,
Of their indulgence there is less to fear,
Yet, I would hope, as some slight recompense,
To give them pleasure, rather than offense.
Whether the pleasure shall exceed the pain,
And prove instead of loss, some little gain,
Each one will doubtless reckon up the score,
And strike the balance, be it less or more.

To the Theologians:

Our friends, well-versed in theologic lore,
Who count their anxious converts by the score,

We trust will take no umbrage while we show
Our reasons for believing thus and so;—
Since one's belief and faith should both agree
With facts and reason, though they may not be
In harmony with dogma and the creeds,
Outgrown by modern scientific needs.
But should they take exception to our plea,
We may, perhaps, agree to disagree.

To the Doctors:

As for the doctors who have called me out,
Of their deserts I have some shade of doubt.
Perhaps they thought to test my muse to-night,—
Or would she wing a low or lofty flight,—
Prompt quaint home-thrusts in Hudibrastic rhyme,
Descend to dogg'rel, or soar to the sublime?
I know not what they did expect to find.
'Tis hard to probe the Æsculapian mind,
Or know just what they think in every case,—
As, where the subject wears a doubtful phase,
They have a way of looking wondrous wise,—
Turn as it will, it never can surprise.
As much to say, "I could have told you so,
An' if I would"—a mental "Placebo."
Whate'er their thoughts or expectations are,
Their "Diagnosis" they can now prepare.
When "Consultation" shall have taken place,
And they have made "Prescription" for the "Case,"
According as the "Symptoms" may direct,
Their wise "Prognosis" we shall then expect.
And, in due time, when "Death" has had its turn,
Their verdict on "Post-Mortem" we may learn.

PREFACE

Premise we, then, as prelude to our theme,
By setting forth as basis of our scheme,

Two principles, designed to make us free,—
Twin powers of light:—Knowledge and Liberty!
Transcendent boons of might to mortals given
To reach the truth and make of earth a heaven.
These noble principles, when thus applied,
Are our best friends, and should go side by side,
Each from the other borrowing aid and strength,
Assisting man in all, until at length,
They lift him up, while leading him along
His brightening path, and make him bold and strong;
Dispelling, from his vision, clouds and fogs,
And crude beliefs, and superstitious clogs;—
Knowledge to probe and search out nature's laws,
And Liberty to trace effects to cause;—
Knowledge to comprehend life's aims and views,
And Liberty to think, to speak, to choose;—
Knowledge to judge between the false and true,
And Liberty the right to dare and do.

When these go hand in hand, we need not fear
That truth will be crushed out or disappear;
Nor inquisition lift its hydra-head
To banish reason by its tortures dread.
As we investigate, reflect, compare,
We reach the truth, and errors disappear.
With this exordium, if need there be,
That I may leave your minds and judgment free,
And, in the end, as we the subject see,
We may as friends, agree or disagree.

THEME:—DEATH

So, to my theme, if theme it may be called,
That ever has the stoutest hearts appalled,
Produced more grief, and caused more tears to flow,

Than all the other ills mankind can know.
No more unwelcome guest than this can come;
Yet come it will, and must, to every home;
Spares neither those of high or low degree;
Nor hath respite for either bond or free;
The old, the young, and manhood in its prime,
The saint, as well the sinner steeped in crime,
The statesman, versed in all his country's lore,
The conquering hero, decked with honors o'er,
The laboring swain, the monarch on his throne,
The purse-proud millionaire, the pauper lone,
The infant smiling in its mother's arms,
The lover doting on his fair one's charms,
The blooming maiden, gay and fancy free,
The tender mother dandling on her knee
Her first-born babe, the darling of her soul;
Nor each nor all, his coming can control.
For strive against the summons as we may,
The certainty remains—all must obey.
In spite of pride, of pleasure, mirth, or jest,
This dreadful certainty haunts every breast.
Of all the dreads, since first mankind drew breath,
Think as we may, the crowning dread is—Death!

What then is Death? Does revelation bring
No panacea for this mortal sting?
Is it what preachers fain would have us think,
The way to endless glory, or the brink
From which must plunge the unbelieving soul,
Deep down to where unending torments roll?
Of all the countless millions gone before,
Who ever yet came back from yonder shore,
To tell what lies beyond that silent flood,
Or whether ill awaits us there, or good?
Was ever faintest whisper heard or wrung
From death's cold, marble lips or icy tongue,

Or e'er did gleam, from out the silent tomb,
One ray of light that might dispel its gloom
Or show what lies beyond its portals chill
That might our hearts with woe or rapture fill?
Must we believe death but a dreamless sleep,
O'er which kind guardian angels vigils keep,
Until th' Archangel Gabriel blows his horn
For all to rise upon the judgment morn,
Then to assemble round "the great white throne"
With conscious souls and bodies,—each his own?
When we essay to reason on this theme,
We postulate or start with what we deem
Are facts or principles, well understood,
That our foundation may be sure and good,
And from these premises deduce and show
Conclusions that must follow thus and so.

Then, let us turn to nature and apply
Those means she doth so liberally supply.
Look o'er the world's broad field of active strife,
See nature teeming everywhere with life,
Yet all controlled by fixed, unvaried laws,
Whatever be the subject or the cause.
We find these laws not made alone for man,
Based on the general, not the special plan,
As well their tendency, if understood,
More for the common, than the special good.
The fire that cooks our food and keeps us warm,
May yet become the instrument of harm;
No special law exists to serve our turn,
Because we fall therein we shall not burn.

Existent bodies, whether small or great,
Attract each other, also gravitate
Toward a common centre as a goal,
As if to form one universal whole.

All matter that we see, or feel, or know,
Inanimate or living, high or low,
Subserves its purpose in its varied forms,
While to the common good it still conforms.
One form exists not for itself alone,
But one for all, and all for good of one.

The earth, sun, air, and water, all are free;
They yield their elements to man and tree,
Supply the humblest insect of the vale,
As well the great behemoth or the whale.
The food that serves a king's or monarch's use,
Would feed as well a lap-dog or a goose;
The worm that we despise draws its supply,
From the same elements as you or I;
The modest cricket, chirping on the hearth,
That pipes for us its timid song of mirth;
The feathered songster of the wood and glen,
That fills the air with melody for men;
The sturdy ox that, patient to the yoke,
Plods slowly on in spite of driver's stroke;
The mettled steed that scours across the plain,
Obedient to his master's will and rein;
The faithful dog that licks his master's hands,
Although he turn and beat him where he stands;
All forms that live and breathe—a mighty tide,
From the same elements are all supplied.

All forms that live and breathe must perish, too,
And render up again, as we must do,
Each his proportion to the common store
Of elements from which he drew before.
The dying vegetation yields again
Its elements, which other life sustain.
No paradox to say, though it seems strange,
Life feeds on death, for death is but a change—

A resolution of old modes and form,
While to a new its elements conform.
Without the sere and yellow leaves to fall,
Which winter covers with its snowy pall,
How could we have the springtime bud and bloom,
Or where, for autumn's golden fruit, the room?
Without the verdure furnished by the fields,
No ripened grain our bounteous harvest yields.
The new-mown hay, as well the flowers that bloom,
Yield up their substance in their sweet perfume—
For what the fragrance of the sweetest flower,
But exhalation of its own life power?

With loving hearts we watch beside the bed,
Where lay so late our dearest friend, now dead.
We scarce can realize, in our despair,
'Tis but material grouping that lies there.
The mould of feature and of form remain,
But unresponsive is that heart and brain.
No motion there, the vital force is spent—
No consciousness or mind, the soul is rent!
With solemn rites, and sacred, tender care,
Our hearts o'ercharged with grief, we slowly bear
And place within the grave that still, cold form,
So late we saw in life with pulses warm;
In anguish shed the unavailing tear,
Our last, sad tribute on the lonely bier;
Then turn away in bitterness of soul,
Our hearts so crushed e'en prayer cannot console.
With loving tenderness in after hours,
We go at times and strew the grave with flowers.
Nor do these offerings content, alone,
We carve and raise the monumental stone,
That shall record in later years to come,
The worth and virtues of the absent one.

Although we venerate that resting-place,
Where only by the sunken sod we trace
Its sacred precinct in long after years,
As we go there and water it with tears,
Our friend, nor his remains, lies there no more,
Though dead, "yet risen," as 'twas said of yore.

Nature had use for what it lent before,
And resurrected what it had in store,
Atom by atom, with a patient hand,
And scattered this once more throughout the land,
To be absorbed by new creations, when
They spring to life in other forms again;
All which, as well, must in their turn decay,
And yield to others still, which pass away.

And is this all?—Is death the final goal?
And does it claim as well the conscious soul?
Is this life all there is for us to live?
Has nature, then, no greater boon to give?
No blissful greetings on that far-off shore,
Where soul communes with souls gone hence
before,
No more with frail material bodies laden,
In that leal-land of faith—the promised Aidenn?

THEME:—IMMORTALITY

Explain to us, ye learned savants who can,
A *conscious* immortality for man.
Adduce the proofs, if you have found them out,
That we may know, and may no longer doubt.
Soul, spirit, mind, as science will maintain,
Are only one, the offspring of the brain,—
Whether regarded as but one or more.
Can mind exist without a brain before?

Can we be capable of knowing aught,
Without perception, consciousness, and thought?
Or, how without organic nerves and brain,
Can we perceive, or conscious thought sustain?
Was ever known, opposed to nature's plan,
A living, thinking, conscious, brainless man?
With all the close relation they sustain,
Does mind not prove dependent on the brain?
From whence is mind with consciousness derived?
Is it an entity, distinct, contrived
With certain subtle forces of its own,
(Which even to itself are quite unknown),
And thus endowed, enabled to perform
Its varied functions without brain or form?
Is it derived from some supernal source,
Complete in function, energy, and force,
Supplied with due capacity and worth,
In readiness to fit some special birth?
Has mortal ever yet presumed to trace
A mind's or soul's pre-natal dwelling place?
Or told us when, or how, it came to be
An incorporeal, conscious entity?
And if, on it, volition was bestowed,
Why choose it, for a temporal abode,—
This frail material tenement of earth,
So little helpful long years after birth,
And always subject, from its earliest breath,
To ills and woes, to pain, disease, and death?

Can we in consciousness or reason find
A plea for such pre-natal state of mind?
Can mind endure without extraneous aid,
Without impressions through the senses made?
Its in-born thoughts to other minds convey,
Or acts of will and memory display?
If mind, apart from every sensuous cause,

And independent of organic laws,
Can freely act, its functions all maintain,
Why then are we supplied with nerves and brain?
What greater purpose do our senses serve,
Than to inform the mind through brain and nerve?
Or, what in education do we find,
But to expand and cultivate the mind?
Yet, how can education thus take place,
Without the aid of memory in the case?
Or, how can we that faculty maintain,
Without impressions made upon the brain?
If we're supplied with mind complete at birth,
That shall endure when we have done with earth,
When nerves and brain have yielded to decay,
And all sensations shall have passed away,—
What form shall we assume, what mode of life?
Shall we be free from pain and toil and strife?
Or formless, as some subtle ethers seem,
A voiceless, conscious, immaterial dream?
Must reason yield to sophistry her throne?
Established law for paradox atone—
Which we assert as answering to that end,
And, by this means, seek dogma to defend?

"The body dies," as mortal bodies must;
No longer needful, mingles with the dust;
The soul, by some supernal power unknown,
Takes on a "body spiritual," alone,
Which neither pain can rack, nor ills derange,
Immortal as the soul, and free from change.
A paradox! a body but in name,
Though it assert a *super*-natural claim.
Dogma is satisfied, but where the gain?
Does it relieve or mitigate the pain,
When we refer, to supernatural source,
Absurdities too great to be of force?

A paradox in vain we seek to prove
By relegation to a power above.

Outside of nature, we know naught of laws,
Nor can adduce from thence, to aid our cause,
As postulate or proof, a single fact,
Though it were all our syllogism lacked.
Within that order, where the proof to show
That, when these bodies die, our spirits go
To dwell in some supernal sphere or state
Still conscious of existence and their fate?
What unknown sense, or subtle mode of thought,
Shall be supplied us, or shall we be taught,
That shall enable us to realize
This "immaterial form" the soul supplies?

But what have reason, science, to reveal?
Do they confirm dogmatic faith and zeal?
Or teach us nothing new as facts unfold?
Must dogma be revered because 'tis old,
That it asserts a supernatural claim
To wisdom infinite and truth the same?

The supernatural world, if one there be,
Yields us no facts on which to base the plea:
We shall continue, in some other sphere,
The conscious mental forces we have here,
Since, by the very premise of the case,
We postulate a *super*-natural place,
Not natural, above, beyond our ken,
Unknown, unknowable to mortal men!
Hence, naught from thence can be deduced to show
The least relation to this world below.
With all the facts that science can bestow,
With all the laws of nature that we know,

Reason, the crowning faculty of man,
Affords us not a future state to scan.
It serves our present state alone to know;
Beyond this bound our knowledge cannot go.

Were it not better, then, that we confess
With all due modesty our littleness?—
Accept our station here with thankful hearts,
Content if we act well our several parts,
And leave affairs when we have done with earth,
To those same laws that gave us life and birth?
Eternal nature, plastic in her phase,
Unceasing evolution e'er displays.
Each part relates to others; parts, to whole,
All governed by one universal soul,—
In-dwelling presence, all-embracing law,
Perfect in wisdom, just, without a flaw,—
Controlling principle of all that's been,
Is now, or ever shall be, felt or seen!
Nature's grand archetype, creation's force,
Of life—the essence, of all being—source!
Creation, like a circle, doth extend,
Without beginning, middle, or an end.
What is,—has been, and ever was before ,
What has been—is, and shall be—evermore!

Think as we will, we must at last confess,
No power can make of substance more or less.
New forms and modes continually evolve,
Their mission served, they all again resolve,
And render up their elements in store,
To that same source from whence they drew before,
No atom, more or less, can be descried,
For all the forms that ever lived or died;
No atom of the universal whole

Can e'er escape unvarying law's control.
Law co-exists, inherent in all things;
From it each form and mode of being springs,
Determines which may flourish, which decay,
Which shall continue, which must pass away.
"Fate" is no fiction, nor hath "chance" a flaw,
Since both are but the sequence of stern law—
(Terms often misapplied, yet sound and good,
If only used when rightly understood.)
Law only can determine or declare,
Shall spring a flower here, a nettle there;
That here a man, and there a beast, or whale,
That one be female and the other male,
That fish shall live in water, fowls in air,
That one be homely and another fair,
What species shall survive, which disappear,
Which crowned with reason, which be ruled by fear.

This law is absolute, nor prayers nor pleas
Can abrogate or change its just decrees.
E'en reason, will,—however much they do—
Can change it not, but are its creatures too.
All modes of motion, force, sensation, thought,
Comply with law in every process wrought.
As planets move about a central sun,
On it depending in the course they run;
So this inherent power, omnipotent,
Directs, controls, and gives all others bent.
From that same source is every life supplied,
To that same cause is every soul allied;
To that same fountain must each soul return,
Alike conditioned as before 'twas born.

Pour one small drop within the mighty lake,
Can we regain or ever hope to take

From out its depths, that drop again, entire?
Collect a grain of powder from the fire?
Refill a bubble with the self-same air,
E'en though we strive with fasting and with prayer?
Is it in reason, the Eternal Cause,
To please mankind, should set aside fixed laws?
Perform impossibilities, to prove
Infinity of wisdom, power, or love?

Must God, in order to be God, reverse
The established order of His universe,
And single out from His creations fair,
Man only, worthy His especial care?
And, inasmuch he struts and lords it here,
As worth transporting to another sphere?
Will He be governed by our strong desire,
And make us angels since we would aspire?
Create for us a special heaven above,
Where all is peace, and happiness, and love?
Confer on us, in answer to our prayer,
Immortal life, to dwell forever there?
Have limits been assigned, somewhere in space,
To bound the soul's eternal dwelling-place?
Without those offices, our senses serve,
By which perception comes through brain and nerve,
How recognize, amidst the countless throng
Of disembodied spirits, old and young,
The souls of those we held most dear in life,
As father, mother, children, husband, wife?

If mind or spirit, freed from earthly bonds,
Becomes, thereby, omniscient, and responds
Alone to forces altogether new,
Does it not prove a new creation true?

An "alter ego"—not this one of earth,
Perchance an angel—not of nature's birth?
If, from our spirits, angels are evolved,
Our personality must be absolved.

Conclude we then, from what has gone before,
What has been, is, and shall be evermore.
All living forms in dissolution end;
Their forces still persistent, ever tend,
Through evolution, Phoenix-like, t'unfold
New forms, which spring from ashes of the old.

Each one must judge, as seems most meet and just,
What to reject, what to believe and trust.
Whate'er one's faith, desires, or prayers may be,
There's no escaping Nature's stern decree.
Here rest we, then, our subject and our cause,
Submissive to the power of all her laws,—
Believing her decrees are ever just,
And claim from first to last our sacred trust:—
That he who does the best he knows and can,
Fulfills the highest duty known to man;
Nor need repentance make him blush to tell
When he performs in honest trust so well
Whatever work he has in hand to do,
To reason—faithful, and to conscience—true.
Respecting Nature's laws without offense,
He will, in turn, receive due recompense.
And when at last his great life-work is done,
As failing powers proclaim his race is run,
No dread misgivings need his mind control,
Nor direful bodings of a fabled sheol.
He, rather, by a peaceful calm sustained,
May trust the laws that Nature has ordained,
And, judging of the future by the past,
Know she will order all things well at last.

Then, as relates the soul to future time,
What consolation could be more sublime
For him who follows Nature's laws below,
As it were all there is of Heaven to know:
A well-spent life leaves nothing to atone
In preparation for the Great Unknown.

TRUTH—AN ALLEGORY

We read in fable, when Old Time was young,
That from the brain of Jove great Pallas sprung,
In all her panoply of power and might—
Goddess of Wisdom, Science, Knowledge, Light,—
O'er which, as well the gentle Sister Arts,
She still presides,—a very queen of hearts;
To whom just fealty, allegiance true,
Most gratefully we would accord her due;
And, as an earnest for her future care,
No zeal nor efforts will we grudging spare,
Since this fair goddess, if we judge in sooth,
Can personate no other than the Truth.

LIFE

Life is a tangled maze in web and woof,
As every day we live gives signal proof.
We have no land-marks reaching on before
To tell us what to-morrow has in store;
What powers for joy or sorrow may combine,
Or, even, if for us, the sun will shine.

Some trust in "destiny" to shape their end,
While some for "freedom of the will" contend;
Some ground their faith in "special providence,"
Some put their trust alone in "common sense;"
But reason as we will, at last we find,
Whatever be our trust, or faith, or mind,
Our lives and acts are swayed by circumstance.
And e'en our secret thoughts are ruled by chance,
As well the sage conclusions that we draw—
For chance is but the sequence of stern law;
Conditions that environ must control,
Sure as is needle governed by the pole.

A trifling object often at its source
May change a mighty river in its course;
A narrow strip of ground a man may stride,
Or rocky summit forms "the great divide,"
By which two rain-drops, falling side by side.
This, swells Atlantic's, that, Pacific's tide.
The merest incident may change our fate,
May mar our fortune or may make us great.

Strong will and firm resolve, which we esteem
Such potent factors, are not all supreme,
Though much they may achieve and much avail;
Yet subtler forces often will prevail,
Which to our minds so trivial appear
As not to cause us grave concern or fear,
Or quite escape our notice, till too late—
The record stands upon the "Book of Fate."

To-day life's pathway seems all clear and bright,
To-morrow shrouds it in the gloom of night,
And leaves us cheerless, groping here and there,
Without a guide, and almost in despair,
Till, through the rifted clouds, a ray of light
Streams out again to guide our steps aright.
Although we gain experience by the way,
Acquire new facts and knowledge day by day,
Yet do we find them needful all the more
To meet conditions we saw not before.

The more we know, the more we find to learn,
Some new discovery at every turn.
From cradle to the grave, 'twixt faith and doubt,
The maze continues, winding in and out,
Certain in little that we do or try,
Except that we are mortal and must die.

"NO SUN GOES DOWN BUT LIGHTS ANOTHER SKY"

Science affirms, and proves beyond a doubt,
Nothing in nature can be blotted out.
Old forms and modes may be exchanged for new,
May, e'en forever, disappear from view.
Yet, though existing forms may pass away,
Or be resolved, as scientists would say,
To their constituent elements once more,
Their forces still continue as before.

All things must yield to law, at any cost;
Nothing is wasted, thrown away, or lost.
The earth its daily revolution makes,
By which its surface, thus exposed, partakes
One-half, alternately, of day and night.
One-half, the sun supplies its flood of light,
Its genial warmth and fructifying power,
From so-called rising till its setting hour.
Meanwhile, until its setting in the west,
The other half gains sleep and needful rest.
Why, then, should man repine, complain, or sigh?
"The sun goes down but lights another sky."

Nature is ever just in all her laws,
Although we cannot always probe the cause.
Had not great Socrates been made to drink
The cup of death, from which all mortals shrink,
And, yet, which he so cheerfully partook,
Without complaint or deprecating look,
He had not reached the acme of sublime,
Nor proved philosophy could be divine.

This grand, old Greek philosopher declared,
When he had drunk the poisoned cup prepared,
To weeping friends, who could not be consoled,
Because they might no more his face behold,
"They but destroy my form and stop my breath,
It is not Socrates, they put to death."
Although a bright particular sun had set,
Which lit the ancient world, he lights *this* yet.

Nature is bountiful and doth supply
A galaxy of suns to light the sky;
Far as the eye with telescope can sweep,
Celestial orbs eternal vigils keep;
Orb upon orb, in countless systems, roll—
Suns, planets, stars, in one stupendous whole.
One was not made for its own self alone,
But one for all and all for good of one;
Each has its own peculiar mission to fulfill
Imparting force, receiving others still.

All forces are but modes of one great whole,
All are correlative and Law the soul.
So, too, with mental forces of all men,
Though we may never see their forms again,
Which, ever changeful, yield to death's decay,
Their forces are not lost nor passed away.
For mental power and force can never die,
They seem to pass, "but light another sky."
Great minds continue for all future time
To light life's orbit in their course sublime.

Immortal Homer lives in classic page,
With glory still undimmed from age to age.
He still recounts, in mythologic strain,
Great Priam's loss, the gods and heroes slain,
Brave Hector's death by bold Achilles' hand,

Viewed both by Trojan and by Grecian band,
The causes which this bloody siege prolong,
Fair Helen's fatal charm, and Paris' wrong.

In august grandeur, shine great Pericles—
Leader and Archon of old, classic Greece—
And she, on whom this statesman could depend,
Aspasia—teacher, counselor, and friend,
Whose genius, culture, eloquence, and grace
Made her his worthy compeer in the race.
The sweet-toned Virgil, in his silv'ry tongue,
Details in glowing light—as erst-while young—
Aeneas' trials with his subtle foes,
His brave endurance under many woes,
His weary wanderings in unknown seas,
And lights his hero safe, through all of these,
Brings him at last to friendly port and home,
To be the founder of eternal Rome.

Tasso and Milton, as of old, still shine,
Still chant for us their solemn verse divine.

Scott, Moore, and Byron, brilliant stars of song,
Still, as of old, their melodies prolong.
The varied notes, this trio have expressed,
Find echo still in every human breast;
Soft, grave, or gay, pathetic or sublime,
They stir the soul like old Cathedral chime,
Move us to laughter, wonder, pity, tears,
Touch every chord like "music of the spheres."

The poet's, painter's, and the sculptor's art
Appeal directly to the human heart.
The products of their labor, study, thought—
Creations of the brain—should be so wrought
As to enlist the mind with full control,

To please, instruct, and elevate the soul.
As emanations of the mind and heart,
Men's thoughts and deeds are, of themselves a part.
Thoughts, being forces, cannot be destroyed
But live forever as at first employed;
They still shine on, although we see them not—
May for a season even be forgot.
The electric fluid flashes on our sight,
Then, disappears from view its vivid light.
But 'tis not lost and may again return,
Or, in some other place, may flash and burn,—
May, in some other orb, light other skies,
Since it possesses force which never dies.

The light afforded by the shining sun
Is but combustion evermore begun.
Thoughts are resultant of the burning brain.
Nerve tissue is consumed and formed again.
All motions that we make and acts we do
Are but resultant of combustion, too.
Our muscles are consumed—supplied again,
Action ensues, as thought from burning brain.
The sacred fire Prometheus filched from Heaven,
The electric spark brought down by Franklin, even,
All forces that we feel, conceive, or know,
If analyzed, but from combustion flow;
And from combustion form anew,—the law
Of conservation has no break or flaw.
What greater proof could Nature then supply?—
"No sun goes down but lights another sky."

As do the starry heavens present to view
Innumerable orbs of varied size and hue,
So, too, the field of intellect affords

Talents and powers of different accords.
It were not well that every sun and star
Had equal power to spread their beams afar;
Or that all were in magnitude the same;
No more should all men equal talents claim.
Nature, by wise and compensating laws,
Assigns to each what best may serve her cause,
Provides for man capacities and power,
The time and means, if only hour by hour
He will improve them, as he may and should,
For onward progress to the true and good.

Some may approach, though few can hope to climb,
The dizzy heights and altitudes sublime
Where Shakespeare, peerless, shines in tragic verse
As well in comedy, pursues his course.
Some are, like Fox and Pitt and Burke, the source
Of lesser planets in less brilliant course;
They, like our mighty Webster, Clay, and Cass,
As orators and statesmen all surpass.

Can we no sage conclusions, then, deduce,
That well may serve us for our future use?—
May make us wiser, better men, and true,
More zealous in the work we have to do?
Whatever sphere or station that we fill,
Requires good thoughts, strong energies, and will,
The best we can produce or have to give,
Since what we do outlasts the life we live.
Our light may be a guiding star to some,
And still shine on through centuries to come.
Of all the millions that now live and breathe
None is so poor, but may, and must, bequeathe
Something to future time, of good or ill,—
The light each leaves behind will shine on still.

He who lives only for the present time
Can never hope to make his life sublime,—
Or leave behind him, when his course is run,
A glorious light like to the setting sun.
How grand the thought, that men, like gods, can
live,
Their thoughts and deeds, to future ages, give!

The march of Mind is onward to be free,
Its banner floats o'er every land and sea;—
Inscribed in light, upon its folds unfurled—
"Freedom to all,"—its empire is the world.
So think and act that, when your race is run,
You may receive the meed of praise— "well done."
Ever rememb'ring, what you do or try,
"No sun goes down—it lights another sky."

IN MEMORIAM DIEI ANNIVERSARIAE

Willard Parker Helm

"Eheu! fugaces labuntur anni."

In the glad, merry days of his childhood and youth,
No desires ever swayed him from virtue and truth.
With a kind word for all, and a bright, cheerful smile,
No one knew but to love and admire him, the while.

As he bloomed into manhood, grand, glorious, and bright
Were the visions and promise of life to his sight,
As with soul-beaming eye he looked eagerly forth,
Proud to test in the conflict his might and his worth.

He was all that our most ardent hopes could desire,
For no spirit e'er glowed with a holier fire,
Noble, loving, and brave, gallant, gentle, and kind,
Not a blemish to mar either person or mind.

How our hearts bounded then, in the fulness of joy,
As we gazed on the form of our brave, noble boy,
With a mind that illumined his proud, manly face,
Every feature and limb full of beauty and grace.

We rejoiced then to think of the honors and fame
That our son was to conquer and add to his name.

On his judgment, his courage, and strength we relied,
To steer his bark safely and stem every tide.

Yet alas! human hopes are but empty and vain
When assailed by the enemy, sickness and pain,
For no power can withstand the all conquering foe—
When he comes on his white horse, some loved one must go.

From the depths of the soul comes the heart-broken wail,
"Can it be he is dead! Oh! can nothing avail"?
Oh, speak to us, darling, once more let us hear
Those accents so welcome, that voice ever dear!"

But he hears not, he heeds not—all rigid and cold—
His tongue is now silent, its last whisper told!
Kiss again those mute lips, and that pure marble brow,—
'Tis the last pledge of love we can offer him now.

Nevermore! nevermore shall we see him again!
Yet, forever and ever will linger the pain;—
Even memory serves but to torture anew,
By the wound, which to others is hidden from view.

Ever since we have laid our brave darling away
In the cold, silent grave, from the light of the day,
There is nothing more left us but sorrow and tears—
Thus, sadly and mournfully roll on the years.

SLEEP

PROLOGUE

My friends, the subject that I bring,
Is one a sleepy bard might sing;
Yet none the less to write my song
Cost me some weary vigils long,—
However trifling though it seems,
While you were in the "land of dreams."

My theme is not a mournful one,
Nor popular and full of fun,
Such as a modern bard might choose
To melt to tears, or to amuse,—
Which seems of late to be the rage,
Sensational—to suit the age.
Such as it is, let each one be
Impartial, and at liberty
To laugh at, praise, or criticise,
Admire, condemn, or e'en despise.

The brave Pegasus that I stride
Has led me many a jaunty ride;
Like Tam O'Shanter's rat-tail mare,
He halts not at a trifling scare,
Yet, if pursued by de'il or wizard,
He scuds away like any blizzard.
But now a modest pace he'll keep
To suit our dreamy subject—*Sleep.*

SLEEP

As shadows of the solemn night
Replace day's shimmering flood of light,
And stars, like sentinels, appear,
To light their watch-towers, far and near,
The hum of weary toil and strife
Is hushed, where ere was active life.

The field, the shop, the mart, the street,
No more resound to busy feet;
Day's carking cares from every breast
Are laid aside for peaceful rest.
The poor forget their wants and woes,
The rich their pride, in sweet repose,
What e'er their station, birth, or race,
Sleep folds them all in one embrace;
Regards alike both young and old,
As children of a common fold.
With magic talisman and skill,
It soothes to rest the active will;
E'en for a season brings relief
To minds distraught and racked with grief;
Smoothes wrinkles from the brow of care,
And leaves instead, composure there;
Subdues awhile, to peaceful rest,
Those base-born passions of the breast,
Hate, envy, jealousy, and pride,
And fierce desires, that ill betide,
As gently weighs the eyelids down
Of those who weep, or laugh, or frown.

Youth, manhood, and decrepit age,
The saint, the sinner, and the sage,
The statesman, savage, king, and boor,
The high, the low, the rich, the poor,
Equals, by night, if not by day,
All yield alike and own its sway.

Sleep conquers all, but spares us breath,—
The living prototype of Death!
And yet we fear or dread it naught,
Though it suspends our will and thought;
Although one-third of life, its cost,
To consciousness and memory lost.
Nor do we strive to shun its thrall,
Nor sigh those moments to recall;
Rather as if we sought to give
So great a boon to cease to live.

Though without consciousness and thought,
Life seems a blank that values naught,
Yet search all Nature through, we see
Nothing was made in vain to be.
Nature's demands are so impressed,
Our minds and bodies needs must rest,—
Rest, to regain new will and power,
To start afresh at waking hour,—
Rest, that each organ may take on
New vigor for the day begun.
Sweet sleep, then, gives this needful rest
That makes us mortals truly blest.
Not all the gold of Croesus, king,
Nor jewels that Jamshid could bring,
Would value with one hour of sleep,
To one condemned and doomed to keep
A life-long vigil, though 'twere spent
'Mid mirth, and song, and merriment.

Sing Io peans then, to Sleep—
Let those who must their vigils keep.
All hail this boon to mortals given
That serves them as an earthly heaven!

Now, gentle readers, each and all,
I trust I may have here let fall
Some worthy thought that may requite
Your time and patience,—so Good-Night!

THE FALSE AND THE TRUE

However men think, or whatever they do,
This life is a war of the false and the true.
The contest begins from the moment of birth,
And lasts till we fall and are covered in earth.
No one may escape in this service—the fight
That ever goes on, of the wrong and the right.
This war was begun, and its ensigns unfurled,
The moment, "free will" was proclaimed to the world.
By primeval man, in the first early dawn,
The shield was assumed and the sword was first drawn,
Which has never been sheathed in its scabbard again,
But evermore wielded, wherever were men.
Flashing now in the sunlight, and then in the shade,
Ugly scars it hath left, fearful gashes hath made;
All lands have been strewn with the dying and dead,
And drenched in the dark, crimson tide, it hath shed.

The Gheber, the Savage, the Saracen horde,
The Christian, the Moslem, the serf, and the lord,
The Jew and the Gentile, the Pagan and Moor,
The mighty, the lowly, the rich, and the poor,
The Goth and the Vandal, the Roman and Greek,
The haughty, the humble, the strong, and the weak,
Have mingled the blood, that once coursed in their veins,

Shed in valleys, on mountains, in forests, on plains.
Hand to hand, face to face, thus they fought in the gloom;
Side by side, as they fell, they were left to their doom.
In numberless thousands—yea, millions untold,—
Like the sands of the sea, could the death-roll unfold.
Whatever the pretext assumed for the strife,
That has cost, in all times, so much treasure and life;
In spite of what casuists argue to show,
Or chroniclers' statements of facts they feign know;
We can plainly discern, when we come to review,
It has been but the war of the false and the true.

Shall it ever be thus? Will this war never cease?
When the lion and lamb dwell together in peace;
When man can conceive of a weak without strong,
Of a truth without error, a right without wrong;
When the wills of mankind shall be moulded in one;
And when all think alike; then, will it be done.
Nor will it before, in the nature of things,—
As positive only from negative springs;
And, again, we behold, out of peace cometh strife;
Antagonists still—out of death springeth life.
If there were no false to compare with the true,
How know it was truth, that was held up to view?
These are relative terms, and always must tend
To excite different views and the will to defend.
As we think—so we will, both to dare and to do;
Hence;—this life is a war of the false and the true.

LAW

In everything existent we define
A subtle principle, or power divine,
In-dwelling presence, all-embracing Law,
Perfect in wisdom, just, without a flaw,
Nature's grand archetype, creation's force;
Of life the essence, of all being source.
No atom of the universal whole
Can e'er escape unvarying Law's control.
Law co-exists inherent in all things,
From it each form and mode of being springs.
As planets move about a central sun,
On it depending in the course they run,
So this all-present power, omnipotent,
Directs, controls, and gives all others bent;
All others are but radii, which extend
Throughout creation's circle without end.

OBLIVION

"Man never is, but always to be blest."

Name me the joys that life is giving,
Or name the life that's worth the living.
You'll find them all at last deceiving,
And end but in despair and grieving.
The only consolation bringing
To life, is from *oblivion* springing.
For we shall cease from vainly groping,
For what is but a hopeless hoping,
Not till relieved and freed by dying,
And when in cold obstruction lying.

No more dull care and earnest striving,
No more vain worry and contriving,
No more desires and anxious longing,
No more vexation, spite, or wronging,
No more injustice and deceiving,
No disappointed hopes and grieving,
No painful partings, tears, or weeping,
Will e'er disturb that dreamless sleeping.

Oblivion, then, is Nature's giving
Sweet peace to every mortal living.
Law absolute and all-controlling
Decrees it as a fact consoling,
Intended not for our distressing,
But for our chief, eternal blessing.

THE BRAIN

How grand an organ is the human brain!
Yet how minutely sensitive to pain;—
By it we think, remember, will, and know,—
Through it all feelings and sensations flow,—
By it we reason, analyze, and learn,—
Through it we suffer, or enjoy, in turn.

No knowledge, thought, or feeling can obtain,
But by and through that complex organ—brain.
Prick but the finest filament of nerve,
No sooner done, than does the brain observe
The injury, though slight, as soon as felt,
As if some hard or serious blow was dealt.
A word, but breathed or whispered in the ears,
An instantaneous consciousness appears;
The slightest sound impresses on the brain
Ideal images, for joy or pain.

All objects, though inanimate, transmit
And exercise their influence, to wit:
The images of objects are perceived,
By which ideal notions are conceived;
Impressions on the brain at once are felt,
Soon as the influence causing them is dealt,
Perception instantly succeeds to sense,
With its relations, and the consequence.

Our wants and needs, our safety and our weal,
Made known through brain, to that they all
appeal;
All of the pleasure, that our thoughts employ,
Of happiness and peace, of hope and joy,—

All that we suffer and endure of pain,—
All these are realized, but by the brain.

Whether from physical or moral cause,
Nature doth, all the same, enforce her laws;
All passions and emotions have their source,
Existence, and endurance, in brain force.
When we, creation's works, compare and scan,
Nothing, we find, so wonderful as man;
And as we still investigate, we find
Nothing in man so wonderful as mind;
Of all creation's forces, great or small,
The most complex, most delicate of all,—
Whatever said of each, or all of them,
The crowning jewel in the diadem.

The mind, which doth this glory, then, maintain,
Is the result, or product, of the brain.
This crowning glory of the human race
Is that, and that alone, which gives it place
In intellectual scale,—but one remove
From angels, or the very gods above.
This, then, our *trinity*—yet *one* again—
Soul, spirit, mind,—the off-spring of the brain.

THE POET

Though you may slight the poet's song,
And prize his verse of little worth,
Still, that alone may yet prolong
Your mem'ry when you've passed from earth.

You term him but an idle drone,
Producing neither wealth nor store;
In coming years, his verse alone,
Than all your gains, may value more.

The fortune, that you strive to gain
And hoard with watchful, jealous care,
When you are gone, may not remain
To prove a blessing to your heir.

One generation lives to save
That, which another makes an end;
The one, no sooner in the grave,
Than does the next, launch out to spend.

Then, why this insane thirst for gain?
Does life present no nobler aim?
Are all the poet's labors vain,
That strive for beauty, culture, fame?

Creations of the poet's brain—
Ideal beauties—never fade;
As well their freshness will remain
A thousand years, as one decade.

Ideal beauty is a joy
To ev'ry soul that feels its sway,—
A pleasure pure, without alloy,
The same tomorrow, as today.

To make immortal, *deed* and *thought,*
To teach—to please,—the poet's aim.
What work more noble could be wrought,
That gives to future years his name!

Accord the poet, then, his due,
The grateful meed of cheerful praise—
Nor less could he expect from you,
Recipient of his dreams and lays.

The crown, the poet seeks to wear
Is not like one that princes use;
Nor is it gemmed with jewels rare;—
But simple laurel suits the muse.

HEAVEN AND HELL

Nature alone is perfect in her plan—
Both good and ill are relative to man.
Opposing principles on every hand
Make life a constant struggle, fierce and grand.
As man succeeds, as victor in the strife,
He demonstrates the nobleness of life;
Were there no principles to be withstood,
It were no virtue to be wise and good.
Without the power to will what we shall do,
To choose the right or wrong, the false or true,
What were our merit, though we did the right,
Or blame for wrong, compelled thereto by might?
Commensurate with every act or deed,
Whatever be our wish, or prayer, or need,
Our acts, resultant of our thought and will,
Leave mind the motor and prime factor still,
And hence, responsible, must reap, as meet,
The harvest of its sowing, tares or wheat;
Whether the harvest prove our loss or gain,
The mind alone feels all the joy or pain.
Then, why should heaven be always far away?
It may be here, if so we will, to-day.
Nor heaven nor hell is any local place,
Above, below, or anywhere in space,
Nor mansion of the blest, nor final goal,
But is the true condition of the soul.
Whatever "creed" or "dogma" may accord,
Heaven's man's recompense and just reward,
Though he achieved not, in his humble part,
The highest work of genius, skill, or art.

Injustice cannot nature's laws confound;
Where heaven is, there ill cannot abound.
Who knows and does the wrong will find, as well,
Wherever there is evil there is hell.
Why need we seek beyond "this vale of tears"
For that reward which in this world appears?
To each one as he doeth ill or well—
To this one, heaven on earth, to that one, hell.
Heav'n blesses those who seek and will to do
The just and right because 'tis good and true;
While evil thoughts, and evil deeds as well,
Receive the curse and just reward of hell.

PLEASURE AND PAIN—AN ALLEGORY

Pleasure and Happiness, twin sisters, fair—
  Off-spring of Virtue and Sun-god—were born
All radiant with joy, as seraphs are,
  And dwelt in Heaven before Creation's morn.
Nor, were these lovely Goddesses forlorn,
  But full of smiles and winning arts and grace.
Where 'er they went, from out their plenteous horn,
  They scattered gifts for all, in every place,
  And left a smile of joy on every face.

Meanwhile, in gloomy Tartarus, abode
  An ancient family—but not the same,—
For, in their bosom, fiery passions glowed,
  That oft-times kindled into lurid flame,
And blasted all who in their influence came,—
  The Furies these, foul-visaged imps of bane,
Of whom the youngest, sired by Vice and Shame,
  Twin brothers were, called Misery and Pain.—
  Who knew them once, ne'er cared to know again.

At length, midway, between these two, abode
  The fruitful earth with race of mortals teemed,
In whose frail breasts conflicting passions glowed,
  A blending of both good and ill;—they seemed
One moment, like the Gods—the next, there gleamed
  From out the eye—true index of the soul—
A lurid fire like to the Furies' deemed,
  Which quite bereft them of all self-control,
  As needle, swerved by lodestone, quits the pole.

Great Jove, not all unmindful of the race,
Considered long, and then devised a plan
That well might suit, in every time and place,
To govern best this fickle species, man.
Thus, somewhat in this way, his edict ran:—
Pleasure and Pain alternate sway shall bear.
And, more effectually the race to scan,
Pleasure with Happiness her sway shall share,
Misery with Pain, to power, co-equal heir.

PRAYER FOR LIGHT

Great God of Nature! give, Oh, give us light,
Some ray of knowledge to illume the night,
In which dread Death has shrouded from our sight
Our noble friend, and left our hopes a blight!
Grant us the power to read the book of fate,
To pierce the bounds of this, our mortal state,
And solve the myst'ries of that strange Unknown,
Which every soul must enter on, alone.
Oh, where, throughout the vast domains of space,
Shall we the journey of that spirit trace?
Its present mode of being, how define?
In what condition—human or divine?
Knows it of aught, our anguished hearts sustain?—
Our unavailing grief,—our ceaseless pain?
Is it still conscious of our boundless love?
Our deep and earnest longings, can it prove?
Reason, the noblest gift to mortal man,
Avails us not that future state to scan.
Nor does it serve that fearful arch to span,
That springs o'er that profound abyss, sublime,
And stretches onward from the shores of Time,
O'er Death's dark stream, whose Lethean waters roll
Between us and that Aidenn of the soul,
Where all is peace, where knowledge, clear and bright,
As noon-day sun, dispels these clouds of night—
These earth-mists of conjecture, doubt, and fear,
And slavish ignorance, which shroud us here.
Of all we think we know, how vain the boast.

Since what we most desire to know is lost
In mystery inscrutable; no power
Of science, art, or intellect can soar
Beyond the bounds of Death—the great Unknown.
As yet, we're sure of ignorance, alone.
Vouchsafe us, then, great God of Nature, light,
To comprehend that great Unknown aright.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

BANQUET POEM

An address delivered at the Reunion Banquet of Union College Alumni of the Northwest. Chicago, Ill., January 11, 1881.

Hail, brothers of this noble band!
Estranged and scattered through the land,
Yet mindful of the tie that binds
A brotherhood of kindred minds,—
And not forgetful of the source
From which we drew our mental force,
Ere Alma Mater sent us forth
To test our courage, strength, and worth.
Hence, once a year, with one accord,
We gather round the festive board,
And lay life's busy cares aside,
Its vain ambitions, hopes, and pride,
As there we give, receive, and hear,
From each, kind greetings and good cheer.
Perchance, some meet who never yet
Before have in this circle met;
And yet, though strangers heretofore,
As if each face had marks in store,
By virtue of our common mother,
We recognize each as a brother.

Each has some by-gones to unfold,—
Some mem'ries of the days of old,
When he, as "Fresh" or Sophomore,
Looked down on all that went before.
He thought himself a brave young man,
Quite competent to lead the van,
When bold exploits his thoughts employ,
As Ajax at the siege of Troy,—

So that the raid came off at night
With "Prex" and "Prossor" out of sight.
Or, when as Junior, more sedate,
In oratory and debate,
Surpassing Burke and Fox and Pitt
In logic, argument, and wit;
Or Webster, Cass, Calhoun, or Clay,
By speech upon Commencement Day,—
The coming statesman of the nation—
That is—in his own estimation.
Or Senior, with a look profound,
Whose mental grasp shall yet confound
All learned savants of former time,
And make his name and fame sublime,—
Familiar with all natural laws,
Mechanics, optics, effect and cause.
He walks at home amid the stars,
With Neptune, Saturn, Venus, Mars.
By astronomical deduction,
And logico-absurd reduction,
He calculates just to a tee
'Twixt tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee.

Of all that gather here today,
Not one, but, if he would essay,
Some pleasant incident could tell
That during college-life befell
Himself or fellows in that race
Which mem'ry kindly comes to trace,
And brings them to our view once more
In all their freshness as before.
But joy, like time, speeds swiftly by,
And mirth is followed by a sigh.
So fleet is time on pleasure's wings,
We scarcely note the joys it brings
Before 'tis gone,—like meteor sped

Athwart the sky,—its fires are dead.
We start,—we sigh,—would fain re-live
Those moments gone, if but to give
A stricter heed, than erst before,
To what can be re-called no more!

* * *

With pleasant mem'ries of the by-gone days,
Our minds recall,—each in their several ways,—
Some sad experience, some bitter grief,
For which the joys of life bring no relief;—
Some loved one of the household, gone before,
O'er death's dark waters, to the other shore—
From whence he beckons with a shadowy hand
For us to join him in that leal land,
Where all is peace, where knowledge, clear and bright,
As noon-day sun, dispels these clouds of night,—
These earth-mists of conjecture, doubt, and fear,
And slavish ignorance which wrap us here.
We search in vain for many a noble form
Whose hand we used to grasp in friendship warm,—
Or, arm in arm, with whom we often strolled,
While hopes and plans of future life were told;
Or out beyond the College campus strayed
To lounge beneath the stunted pine tree's shade,—
Or ramble through the pastures, side by side,
Above where flows the turbid Mohawk's tide.
As morning bell pealed out its early call
An eager crowd poured forth to Chapel Hall.
With salutation, joke, or snatch of song,
Each heart, elate with hope, felt bold and strong,
And all impatient to begin the fight
In which to test his courage and his might.

Now many a year has come and gone since then,
And all have fought life's battle like brave men,—
As shown in seam and line on many a brow,—
These touched with care,—those silvered over now.
And, as we listen at roll-call to hear
That old response, familiar to our ear,
We find them, one by one, dropped out and gone.
Yet, each one fell with his full armor on.
Nor all—from out the "rank and file"—who fell,
But brave and gallant leaders, too, as well.
Our venerated centenarian—Nott!
Whose mem'ry is enshrined without a blot
Or stain to mar its grandeur or its fame,
Within the hearts of all who bear the name,—
Is cherished, as the apple of the eye,
Collegii Concordiae Alumni.
Great Lewis, and brave Jackson, too, are gone,
Loved, honored, and revered by every one.
Their noble lives and names will shine in fame,
And ever shall our grateful homage claim.
Immortal trio—Jackson, Lewis, Nott!
May their grand record never be forgot!

Alumni of old Union, while we pay
Due honors to those heroes passed away,
Let us not prove unmindful of that grace
Or Providence, that brings us face to face
With that beloved and venerable sire,
Whose welcome presence cannot but inspire
Each soul with pleasure, gratitude, and joys,
As "*Foster*-father" greets "his older boys."
To catch the pleasant twinkle of his eyes!—
Ah! what a flood of memories arise!
Though thirty years have come and gone since then,

We see him in the "lecture room" again.
An eager crowd of boys are gathered 'round,—
Note-book in hand,—intent to catch each sound,
As if they would transcribe each word and look,
The speaker uttered, in their minute-book.
Some luckless fellow—"out" the previous night
Is called upon, his problem to recite,—
Gets up confused, pleads "sick," and fain would "bolt,"
But soon is conquered like a fractious colt.
He dreads "Prof's" hum'rous smile more than a scowl,
And so he "fizzles," since he cannot "rowl!"
Now, as the recitation-bell is heard,
Each one crowds 'round to catch some pleasant word.
And not in vain,—and not unlike today,
We note and prize what "Foster has to say."
Professor Foster, our distinguished guest,
Most cordial welcome to the great Northwest!

But banquets, poems, e'en, must sometime close
And leave the friendly guests to seek repose.—
Long may our grand old Alma Mater thrive!
As worthy sons—may each alumnus strive!

TO MY SON ON HIS TWENTY-FIRST BIRTHDAY

To-day you're one-and-twenty, Will,
No longer are a boy;—
May health and peace and plenty fill
Your manhood's days with joy.

To crown your brow, may Honor twine
A chaplet of rare flowers;
May Friendship, Love, and Truth, combine
To cheer your future hours.

May Heaven its choicest blessings send
You all along the way;
And, when at last you near the end,
Hope paint the brighter day.

HIGHER WATER

I was sitting in my sanctum,
Thinking of the rainy weather,
Thinking of the prospect dreary,
Listening to the constant patter,
Of the rain against my window.
Soon my thoughts began to wander
Up the Mississippi Valley,
To the small lake of Itasca,
To the falls of Minnehaha,—
Tracing back a mighty river,—
Mid the mountains, hills, and valleys,
Where its sister rivers start.
Then I wondered if the rainfall,
Like as here, prevailed up northward,
On the prairies of Dakota,
In the wilds of Minnesota,
In the forests of Wisconsin,
Where the pine-trees grow and flourish,
And the cedar reaches heaven-ward;
Where the lumbermen and rafts-men
Cut the logs that build our houses,
Make our barns, and build our houses,
In the Mississippi Valley.—
And I wondered if the streamlets
And the tributary rivers
To the grand old Mississippi,
Would be swollen like our Fabius,
By the constant rains far northward.
Thus I thought, and thus I pondered,
As the rain for days descended,
Many days and nights came pouring,
Spoiling roads and washing bridges,

Filling sloughs and cutting ditches,
Playing havoc in our cornfields,
And among the oat-and-hay-stacks;
Till the sturdy farmers' faces
Grew as long as weary sermons;
And all trade and business languished,
For the lack of sunny weather.—
As thus I sat and sadly thought
On the outward prospect dreary,
All at once I heard a rushing,
Heard a mighty noise like thunder,
As of waters in commotion,
Sweeping onward to the ocean;
Threatening death and dire destruction,
In their mad, resistless fury.—
'Twas the Mississippi booming,
'Twas the grand old river pounding.
How its angry swirl kept rising,
Sweeping on, and ever higher,
Every minute swelling broader,
Overflowing all the bottoms,
To the eastward and the westward.
And, by reason of the waters
Growing higher, higher, higher,
Carrying helpless souls before them,
Sinking steamboats, sweeping bridges,
Drowning, too, the poor dumb cattle
Midst the wreck of barns and houses,
All was threatened with destruction,
And with devastation dire.
Many spoke of Mother Shipton,
She, the prophetess of evil,
Who foretold disaster coming—
In this year—the day of doom.
Then we thought how Mr. Arthur
Might immortalize his record,

Gain the nation's praise and blessing,
Make posterity his debtor:—
If he would by proclamation
Call a body of constructors,
Engineers,—the ablest workers,
Who would build still stronger levees,
Spillways, reservoirs, and basins;
Have the farmers start impounding
Waters, ere they reached the large streams,
Into lakes, both big and little,
Artificial ponds and channels;
Start erecting dams and sewers,
Stop despoiling land of forests,—
(Mighty trees drink up the waters
And restrain their wild caprices—.) . . . .
Thus, the Mississippi valley,
With its rich and vast resources,
Would become an earthly Eden,—
E'en a Paradise on earth.
Then, content we'd plant our cornfields
In the rising of the moon.
In the full, or in the waning,
Harvest wheat and cut our meadows.
And the frosts of chill November
Find us ready for the winter,
For the long nights of December.
And at evenings, round our hearthstones,
As the cheerful firelight flickered,
While the crickets piped and chirruped,
We would pass the good old cider,
Spin our yarns, and smoke our cob-pipes. . .
Then our grand-and-great-grandchildren,
In future times would tell in song,
How the booming Mississippi
Overflowed its banks and bottoms,—
Tell the damage that it rendered,

Of the business that it hindered,
That had been so long suspended,—
How the Higher Water ended,
All the mighty flood abating,
In the year of Christian dating—
Eighteen hundred eighty-one.

KINDNESS

Young man, consider well the part you play;
For every act you do, or word you say,
Is fraught with power for either good or ill
To bias some susceptive mind or will;
For nothing passes quite unheeded by,
But always sure to catch some ear or eye.
Impressions are as lightly made or felt
As snow-flakes, which no sooner fall than melt,
And, like them, may be soon forgotten, too;—
Yet does the snowflake leave a drop of dew,
Which stands related as effect and cause,
In strict accord with fact, and Nature's laws.

So, too, effects—as day succeeds to night—
Must follow every cause however slight.
Impressions, as effects, remain behind,
When cause and causer long have passed from
mind.
Within the waters of the placid lake
Cast but a tiny pebble, yet 'twill make
Concentric wavelets, wid'ning more and more,
Circle on circle, reaching out to shore.
The little stone, to which the waves were due,
Sinks down to rest and disappears from view,
Long ere its own disturbing force is spent,
And lost upon th' impressive element.

Words may, as well as actions, stir up strife,
Cost many men, as well as nations, life.
How changed affairs, by bloody victory won,
When Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon.
"The die was cast"—long years of cruel strife

Succeeded, which cost Europe many a life.
Again, "the die was cast,"—the assassins' blow
Laid at their feet imperial Caesar low;
Then Rome's Triumvir, Antony, arose,
Called down destruction on great Caesar's foes,
By cunning words and burning eloquence
Disclaiming envy, malice, or offense;
Yet, did he stir the people so to hate,
As to avenge his friend,—dead Caesar's fate.

An act completed cannot be forestalled,
Nor can a word once uttered be recalled.
As stands an act, related to effect
At its commission, so we may expect
It will forever stand, for good or ill,
Attempt to counteract it as we will.
Whatever faith or creed we may believe,
Life has a two-fold mission to achieve,—
As it affects ourselves, in part or whole,
And, as we may the common weal control.
Each individual helps to swell the sum,
Both for the present and for time to come,
Of human joys, that from good actions flow,
Or discord, misery, and grief, and woe.

The effect of one rash act may last through years;
One unkind word may cause a flood of tears.
Good deeds, kind words, and pleasant smiles impart
Immortal blessings to the human heart;
Are honored passports, too, of greater worth
Than pride or riches or imperial birth.
He who does ill, that wrong he must atone;
He who does well, to him be praise alone.

TO EACH AND ALL, KIND GREETINGS

Strive not against your neighbor,
  Nor seek to pull him down.
Does he not toil and labor,
  As you do, for your own?

Has he not wife and loved ones
  Who look to him for care?
Would you delight to have them
  Go homeless, starved, or bare?

Do they not wait his tidings,
  And watch for him to come,
With anxious hearts, confiding,
  As yours do you at home?

Are you made much the gainer
  By unkind words or deeds?
Your pathway any plainer,
  For strewing theirs with weeds?

This world is broad and roomy,
  Enough for him and you;
Don't make your neighbor gloomy,
  Whatever you may do.

Nor will you be the poorer
  For kindness you have shown;
Your wealth will be the surer,
  Your virtues, better known.

This life, at best, is fleeting,
  Soon, all will pass that bourn,—
Then let not unkind greeting
  Make other mortals mourn.

LAUGH IF YOU CAN

Laugh if you can, but you may find
  The flower you thought so fair and bright
May prove a phantom of the mind,
  Or cankered o'er with rust and blight.

Laugh while you can, but don't forget
  That some are sad while you are gay;
Your sky, all cloudless now, may yet
  Be overcast ere close of day.

Laugh if you must, but do not scorn
  Your neighbor's cheerless, solemn mood;
All who have been, and to be born
  Must bear life's ill as well as good.

Laugh while the happy mood is on,
  While friends are true and kindly smile;
The time may come when these are gone,
  And leave but sorrow to beguile.

Laugh while you may, there comes a day
  When tears those merry cheeks must trace,
And wash their rosy tints away,
  And leave behind a sober face.

Laugh if you will, but bear in mind,
  Whate'er your faith or unbelief,—
Search where you may,—you ne'er will find
  Joy unalloyed with pain and grief.

IN MEMORIAM

Willard Parker Helm

Pure as the snowflake drifting from above,
His spirit passed away—a life of love,
Of tried devotion to the good and true.
High moral powers, which, with his being grew
To grand proportions and perfection rare,
Showed to the world undoubted proof that there
The seal was set by bounteous Nature's plan,
To give assurance of the perfect man.
Endowed by Nature with a liberal hand,
With gifts of rare refinement and command,—
His clear and penetrating mind, improved
By patient toil and culture, loved
To seek new truths and bring them forth to light,
As trophies of his intellectual might.
In manners graceful, noble, and refined,
In social converse genial, fluent, kind,
A flow of humor, wit, and quiet mirth,
Gave added charm to liberal mental worth.
No supercilious pride nor envy marred
His character, or on one's feelings jarred;
No arrogant assumption of his worth,
But innate, conscious dignity shown forth
Pre-eminent in every act and word.
No feelings of revenge or hatred stirred
His even temper; wrongs he would endure
With patient suff'rance, deeming not the cure
For others' baseness or injustice, lay
In treatment of like kind, which some essay.
Those whom he deemed it privilege to feel
His friends, he loved with true, heroic zeal;

For mother, father, sisters, family
'Twas little less than fond idolatry,—
The earnest reverence of a devotee.
His noble spirit seemed by power divine
Attuned to love and virtue, at whose shrine
He offered up the incense of his youth,
And bowed the soul in worship of the Truth.
While yet upon the golden border-land
Of youth and early manhood, bright and grand,
Life's vision seemed to his enraptured soul
Without a cloud betwixt him and the goal
Of his ambition; and the field of life
Was full of glorious promise for the strife;
While broad and fair and full of sunlight, lay
The pathway, stretching onward and away,
Up to that glorious temple, seen afar,
As mariner beholds his guiding star.

His brief but earnest life on earth is o'er,
And we shall hear his happy voice no more,—
No more on earth shall see his noble form,—
Nor clasp that hand with love and friendship warm,—
No more glad welcomes at his home-return,—
In vain we look, and for his coming yearn.
No more farewells or sadly-sweet good-byes,
That cause the tear to start from loving eyes.
Communings, greetings, partings, all are o'er,
Until we meet upon some other shore,
Beyond that stream, whose waters darkly roll
Between us and that Aidenn of the soul.
In that leal land he waits our coming home,
Nor long will have to wait until we come.
A few short years of grief and tears and pain
For him that's gone before, and then again
We all shall meet together as a band,
To part no more within that better land.

TO MY WIFE ON CHRISTMAS DAY

Though the years steal on and from us,
  And they leave us growing old,
Yet the love of early promise
  Never grows the less, nor cold.

May many a Christmas find you
  Well provided with good cheer.
Every New Year still remind you
  Of the happy one this year.

BANQUET ADDRESS TO THE ANCIENT ORDER OF UNITED WORKMEN

Dear friends: assembled here tonight,
Your cheerful smiles and faces bright
And flashing eyes of every hue,
(Excepting green) from black to blue,
Full well proclaim your noble zeal
When poverty and want appeal.
Your forceful, prompt, and earnest call
Has touched a tender chord in all
'Mong this vast audience that you see,
Convened for deeds of charity,
Responsive, in accord with you,
To duty and to mercy true.

We fain would tender you a feast,
Acceptable to most, at least;
Though not a feast with flowing bowl,
But one of reason—flow of soul;
And one where sense and wit conspire
To touch, as with electric fire,
Each brain, till all shall flash and burn,—
Mind answering mind at every turn.
May we not lack, then, such a power
To fill with joy the passing hour,
In hope that each may bear away
Some pleasant mem'ries of today.
Let sordid cares and jealous pride
From every breast be laid aside;
And every circumstance unite
To crown this banquet with delight!

From out the busy scenes of life,
From weary toil and wearing strife,
As comrades, at the bugle call,
We come, with charity for all—
Hope animating every breast—
And pledge protection ere we rest.
The stern bivouac we'll ne'er give o'er,
Till each one falls, to fight no more!
Though 'tis a contest waged for life,
All may prove heroes in the strife.
And, as we scan each comrade's face,
A common motive there we trace—
Unselfish, generous, and kind,
Well worthy of the noblest mind.—
No grander impulse ever swayed
The human mind than "mutual aid;"
No higher mission to fulfill,
Could be devised by human will,
Or bring more blessings in its train,
As every Knight here will maintain.

'Tis not for power that we contend,
Nor wealth to pamper some base end,
Nor for renown or breath of fame,—
The true Knight has a nobler aim.
Each has his lady-love, and true,
To whom he owes his fealty due,
In whose just cause he strives to prove
A champion, worthy of her love.

The records of our Order show,
Where'er its Knights and comrades go,
The aid and comfort that they bring
Robs even death of half of its sting—
Relieves the racked and dizzy brain,
Exhausted by disease and pain.

For harrowing doubt and mortal fear
For welfare of the loved-ones, dear,
They leave, instead, assurance here.
Our wives and children need not dread
That they shall ever lack for bread,
Be forced to beg, or merit blame,
Or be thrust out to want or shame.

What consolation more sublime
Could touch a heart at such a time!
No trust in dogmas, rites, or creeds—
Though they condone our wayward deeds
And pledge our mortal sins forgiv'n
And sanction selfish hopes for Heav'n,—
Nor all our faith and hope in prayer,
With such a solace can compare!

Already thousands have essayed
These kindly proofs of "mutual aid;"
And felt them as they came to stand
Upon that lonely border-land,
Just by the margin of that wave
Which flows betwixt it and the grave,—
In whose dark waters all must grope,
When life holds out no further hope.
And thousands, too, of loving wives,
Whose noble deeds and faithful lives
Attest their earnest moral worth,
Have, for our efforts thus put forth,
Invoked Heav'n's blessings on our laws,
Our noble brotherhood, and cause.
The orphans' prayers, too, cheer us on
To carry out the work begun.

Let duty, honor, justice, right,
Appeal to every faithful Knight

To falter not, where'er is heard,
From brother Knight, that magic word (—);
But, with due vigilance and zeal,
Respond to that distress appeal,—
E'en though it be a feeble call,
E'en though stars blaze and comets fall.
Let honor be our guide and sheen,
To keep us in "the golden mean."
To others let our deeds be shown,
Such as we should toward our own.

Comrades: the honored name we bear,—
As well the holy trusts we share,
The orphan's tear, the widow's prayer,—
All claim that we must do and dare!
Then, when at last our work is done,
We, like the glorious setting sun,
Content, in peace, may hence depart,
With love and praise from every heart.

Commanders: officers: you share
Important trusts requiring care,
Deliberation, caution, skill,
Judgment—yet mercy and good-will.
'Tis yours to counsel, and devise
Such rules and laws as seem most wise,
Wherein our Order needs must feel
Consist its usefulness and weal.
The honored emblems that you wear,
The staff of office that you bear,
Betoken neither caste nor birth;
But they attest your rank and worth—
The trust in which your brother Knights
Repose in you their sacred rights;
They thus conferred this high degree
As proof of your integrity.

They delegated you, in fact,
In all their interests, so to act
As seems most just and in accord
With every principle and word,
Of honor, equity, and right,
Professed and claimed by loyal Knight.

On you depends, in great degree,
The welfare and prosperity
That, heretofore, has blessed our cause,
Through prudent counsel, wholesome laws,
And should, still more, in coming time,
Crown this, our mission, so sublime,
Not—with vain show or sounding name—
But deeds of honor, glory, fame!

Permit me, brothers, ere we part,
A Sentiment, which every heart
Imbued with love for mortal weal
Must sanction, entertain, and feel
As worthy of his sacred care,
And cherish as his constant prayer.
Sentiment:
Fraternal Order: with foundation sure,
Deep-laid in honor,—may we long endure.
Our cherished Order—noble, god-like, just—
Esto perpetua! our hope and trust!

FREEMEN OR SERFS?

Shall we become mere serfs and slaves,
To fill at last but paupers' graves,—
Surrender up our homes and lands,
To millionaires' and bankers' hands;
Spend lives in weary toil and pains,
To swell those haughty misers' gains?
Like cringing cowards, let them take
The products that our labors make?
Shall we permit these Shylock bands
To forge the fetters for our hands?
Control and shape the nation's laws
To suit their purposes and cause?
Must toiling millions bow the knee,
And only plutocrats be free?
Are we the sons of patriot sires,
Within whose bosoms burn the fires
Of equal rights and liberty,
And yet allow these things to be?
Are we debased and sunk so low
As not to dare to strike the blow,
Against these tyranists who'd make,—
Like Russia's Czar,—us fear and quake?
Are people worthy to be free
Who dare not strike for liberty?
Shall legislators never learn
'Twere safer policy to spurn
These Shylocks' bribes to pass a bill
'Gainst their constituents' jealous will?
Is it unreasonable to state
Oppression breeds distrust and hate,
Which neither aid nor comfort bring,
But rankle like a poisoned sting,

Till justice prompts the sore oppressed
To see their injuries redressed?
When oligarchs combine to sway,
To build up fortunes in a day,
Control the councils of the nation,
And dictate terms of consummation,
By which to rob and plunder more
Our country's treasury and store,
Is it not time, if we be wise,
To sound the tocsin, and arise,
Gird on our weapons for the fray,
Resolved to die, or win the day?
In spite of banks and bonded rings,
Of millionaires and money-kings,
Let's in the name of Liberty
Proclaim, "This Land Shall Yet Be Free!"
And as we strike, our watchword, this—
"Sic Semper vale Tyrannis."

ACTIONS NOT WORDS

Actions not words are indices to scan,
By which to judge and truly measure man.
As evolutions of the soul and heart,
Man's acts and deeds are of himself a part.
Fair words may emanate from basest minds—
As he who trusts to them too often finds—
May serve to mask a heart, all black within,
Intent on crime or stained with guilt and sin.
Words are but symbols representing thought,
May have much value, or they may have naught.
They may reflect the speaker's soul and mind,
Disclose his motive, or may serve a blind.

But acts and deeds bear impress of the will;
E'en though disguised, we trace the motive still.
Words, uttered, may have meaning, deep, profound,
May teach us truth, or prove but empty sound,
May be deceptive, treacherous, untrue,
And made to cover up and screen from view
A fault, a crime, a sinister design,
Perchance, a worthy person to malign.

But acts—however secret or disguised—
Bear evidence that may be realized.

WELCOME TO MY WIFE ON HER RETURN FROM A VISIT

O welcome, dearest, to my heart,
I've watched thy coming long,
And chid the hours—the weary hours—
That did thy stay prolong.

How longingly I hoped thou'dst come,
My love—my Heav'n—my all!
For fondly did'st thou promise me
To listen to *my call.*

Oh! I have watched alone, and sighed
That she would quickly come;
And softly breathed an anxious prayer,
And whispered, "Love, come home!"

Ah, yes, and she has heard my prayer,
Caught in its flight above;
O welcome, welcome home at last,
My fond—my faithful love.

NATIVE WINES—WRITTEN IN 1881

What work more needful for the public weal,
Or should enlist more earnest thought and zeal,
Than one to rid our nation of that curse
Intemperance, than which there is no worse,
None more destructive, withering, and sure,
No evil more deplored, more hard to cure.
Philanthropists have preached, and prayed, and sung,
And pledges have been signed by old and young.

What then infer? Can nothing more be done,—
Shall we rest here, where we at first begun,—
Nor try to solve this problem so profound,—
And can there, then, no remedy be found?
Can observation teach us nothing new,—
Experience and facts present no clew,—
Or Ariadnic thread to guide our course,—
To trace this evil to its fountain source?

A wise physician, skilled our wounds to heal,
At first attempts the causes to reveal;
The cause and sources being well defined,
Appropriate remedies are brought to mind.
To reach the truth, expose and banish wrong—
Could nobler theme engage the poet's song?
This, then, we shall attempt—with what avail,
Remains to show; we can no more than fail.

In every land, in every clime,
In every age, from earliest time,
The human race has been inclined,
Some pleasant beverage to find;

Some beverage that would impart
A cheering influence on the heart;
Whether by carking cares oppressed,
Whether by joyous thoughts impressed,
Whether in social circles gay,
Whether at labor or at play,
Whether we meet a loss or gain
Needful or not, the facts remain.
As all desire and seek for joy,
The many will some means employ,
That will exhilarate the brain,
Produce them pleasure, banish pain;
Whatever men may do, or think,
The many will some beverage drink.

Can we no inference, then, deduce,
That well may serve us some good use?
It does not follow, that all these
Become intemperate debauchees.
Take we our own United States—
Who here become th' inebriates?
Surely not those whose tastes incline,
And whose sound judgment doth confine
Their beverage to *Native Wine,*—
The unmixed product of the vine.

But those who fill a drunkard's grave
Are they, whose tastes perverted, crave
A stronger beverage; so some
Drink whiskey, brandy, gin, and rum,
Adulterated, fiery hell,
As those who make them know full well.
Although they bear a foreign brand,
They never saw a foreign land.
Compounded of the vilest drugs,
They're sold by barrels, kegs, and jugs.

Now let us cast a hasty glance
To sunny Italy and France,
Lands of the olive and the vine,
Whose vintage makes the choicest wine.
Of this their children all partake,
Nor does it of them drunkards make,
Nor prompt to baseness, vice, and crime,
But makes them cheerful, like their clime,
Content and happy, hardy, strong—
Gay as the carol of a song.

And what of this, our own fair land?
Have we not grapes on every hand?
As plentiful as summer rain,
Luscious as those of France or Spain?

Some mild and pleasant autumn day,
When Nature in her colors gay,
Paints woods and landscape to our view
In every shade and tinge of hue,—
Green, scarlet, russet, amber, brown,—
With every color mellowed down,
When thistle-bloom, and leaves of trees,
Scarce ruffled by the lazy breeze,
And golden wheat- and corn-fields dun,
Bask in the hazy autumn sun,
And fruit-trees bend beneath their weight
Of mellow, juicy, luscious freight,—
Sail down Ohio's placid stream,—
Behold her banks with vineyards teem.
Each hillside, slope, plateau, incline,
Is covered by the fruitful vine.
The graceful, festooned rows extend,
From which the purple clusters bend,
In such profusion that we deem
It more like fancy, or a dream,
Than that this endless purple sea,
Can be in sooth reality.

The grapes that grow beside *our* Rhine
Make us a nectar all divine.

Hard-by, the presses running o'er,
Prepare this purple flood for store
In cellars, whence with age, in time,
Issues our choicest native wine;—
Purple, or amber, sparkling, still,
Acid, or sweet, or—what you will—
Which rivals those that Spain or France
Or Italy may dare advance.
Again our far Pacific slope
Gives promise of a future hope
For quantity of pure good wine
With quality and flavor fine.
Already are our own choice brands
Preferred to those of foreign lands.
They need no grave inspector's glass
To make them in the market pass,
Nor analyzing chemist's test
To prove them equal to the best.

We should not here omit to state,
But few, except the rich or great,
Have ever seen or tasted wine
From grapes that grew beside the Rhine.
We get so much on every hand
That bears, and sells for, foreign brand—
"Old port," "Burgundy," "Sherry" wine,
"Madeira," "Hock"—all "genuine"
Duly labeled, and sure to show
Vintage precise of—so and so.
'Tis true their price makes some believe
Them genuine, and so deceive.

Our lighter wines (not drug compounds
Which, every sense of right, confounds)

Are sold at prices, too, that make
The importing jobbers fear and quake.
The poor, as well as rich can buy;
The sick can now their needs supply.
Strong drinks no longer now are thought
To be a tonic, as once taught;
They only stimulate the brain
Then leave it more depressed again.

I would not derogate from those,
Who faithful, labor to expose
The crimes intemperance can show,
With all its dire effects and woe;
But rather wish them all "God-speed"
In saving those who have the need;
Reclaiming from a downward course
The young, the weak, whose mental force
Is not sufficient to control
And keep them from the drunkard's goal.

We then conclude: if men will drink—
And this will always be, we think—
Let them their appetites confine,
And only drink pure native wine.
Reader, consider, then decide,
But always keep upon your side,
The right and truth, which will prevail
As sure as wrong and error fail.

Have I said ill—cast it aside,
Have I said well—by that abide.
Better a thousand-fold to fight
For what is just and true and right,
Though in the ranks we chance to fall,
And so be missed at bugle-call,
Than, coward-like, ignobly stand,
While wrong and error rule the land.

OUR BABE

The angel-soul of him we loved
Sped fleetly to the gates of heaven;
Celestials joyed—the bars removed—
He had no sins to be forgiven.

TO THE SCHOOL TEACHER

Whether in sunshine, rain, or storm,
Whether the day be cold or warm,
Whether through dust, or mud, or snow,
Every day must the teacher go
And be on hand to "take up school,"
And see that all goes on by rule.

At last by dint of watchful care,
She brings to order each one there.
Then recitations, class by class,
Fill in the lagging hours that pass,
Until the longed-for "nooning" hour,
Brings short relief from cares and power;
And pupils cast their books aside,
As on its hinges opens wide
The school-room door—a welcome pass
To each impatient lad and lass.—
All reckless of the stern behest,
The hindmost strives with eager zest,
By surge and shove, to reach the door
Sooner than he that's on before.
With rush and din and merry shout,
The jolly crowd of boys pours out;
Each favorite sport is soon begun,
Some bent on mischief—all on fun,
In which, as if by rule of art,
The voice sustains the leading part.
The girls in order, next, are freed,
Which loosens every tongue with speed;
Nor would they tire of such delight,
Though noon should be prolonged till night,

But still would laugh and chatter on
As fresh as if they'd just begun.
Thus speeds the nooning quickly by,
And *one* is greeted with a sigh.

From morn till noon, from noon till night,
That busy hum brings no respite,
From watching, worry, toil, and care,
For her, nor does it ever spare
Her aching brain, or weary feet,
Exhausted nerves, or temper sweet.
The teacher is supposed by all,
Patrons and pupils, great and small,
To represent a paid *machine*
Devoid of nerves, or feeling e'en—
That is, in person, yet must be
An adept in ubiquity,—
A walking, talking, patent power
"Hired by the month," and hour by hour,
To furnish brains to such as need,
To insure that all alike succeed.
For surely every mother's son
Might prove a second Washington,
If but the teacher did her part
According to the rules and art
Of making scholars out of sticks,
Or senseless stocks, by conjuring tricks,
Whereby, though Nature left a blank,
He comes to take an equal rank
With him who, over books and slate,
Pores eagerly to solve his fate.

But not all cheerless is her task—
The teacher finds some joys to mask
The dull routine of daily toil,
Amid the school-room's vexing moil.

From out that merry, jostling throng,
Some eagle spirits, bold and strong,
Exhibit mental powers and zeal
Which none can doubt, and all must feel,
Give promise of the coming men
Destined to rule our nation, when
Their turn shall come to take their stand
To wield the interests of the land.
Perchance, some stripling in whose breast
The fortunes of our glorious West
Lie dormant now, yet which in time
May make his name and fame sublime.

Disdain not, then, this early start,
In which your teacher has a part.
In coming years you yet may see
'Twas she that shaped your destiny.
Give honor, then, to whom 'tis due,
Respect the pains she takes for you;
Act gratefully and well your part,
So shall you cheer your teacher's heart.

TO MY WIFE AFTER READING BURNS TOGETHER

The de'il may gie's trouble, O!
  Yet spite o' him an a' his sin,
That maks life's cauldron bubble so!
  We twa will bear a cheerfu' een.

Then gie's your heart an' hand o' this,
  An here's my ain to match wi' thine,
An when we meet, we'll hae a kiss,
  As erst in days o' auld lang syne.

HUMOROUS POEMS

THE SPIRIT OF THE TIMES

Class Poem on Commencement Day 1850 at Union College, Schenectady, N. Y.

(Some lines added later)

It has been said by some grave sage,
And truly, too, that this our age
Is one replete with signs and wonders,
Of harnessed steam and silenced thunders;
Of news with lightning speed sent forth,
From East to West, from South to North;
Of water into fuel turned,
Or into oil, in night-lamps burned,
And other things which marvels seemed,
Of which our grand-sires never dreamed.
Free trade, by way of variation,
Shakes up the stolid British nation.
With tons of dynamite, as well,
We blast the rock-ribbed Gates of Hell.
E'en distant Russia's ice-bound coast
Is haunted by its "Nihil" ghost.

Of late, aerial navigation
Assumes a fixed consideration,
And travelers now, as suits their notion,
Can go by rail, by air, or ocean.
Friends distant far, though all alone,
Can now converse by telephone,—
Laugh, cry—Hell-o,—O how they swear!—
'Twere better far they said a prayer,

The voice and tone of speakers, even,
Can be corked up, preserved, and given

To their descendants, in such measure,
At sundry times, as suits their pleasure.

Spirits give answer now complete,
By mystic raps 'neath ladies' feet,
And read the thoughts of passers-by,
And spell out words of destiny.
More startling still, chairs, tables, brooms,
Like living creatures, 'round the rooms
Unbidden move, while housewives mourn
O'er garments all to tatters torn
By hands, concealed from human view;
And, yet, though strange, 'tis true,—'tis true—
A privileged few with faith intense,
Converse with friends departed hence,
In seances vouchsafed by Mott,
And other mediums who do not
Of course, admit the skeptic in
The enchanted circle, where, within,
The timid, stalking ghosts repair
To show and prove just who they are;
And why they wander on the blasts
Of this bleak world, fulfilling tasks
Or love and mercy, for the few,
The elect, who think the doctrine true.

Others there are, through power magnetic,
With closéd eye, become prophetic,
And see through earth and air and sea,—
But how? Oh, that's the mystery!
Some tell by bumps upon the head,
How much the ladies wish to wed,
What beaux will suit their inclination,
Which more will please them,—fame or station.

Some covet pleasure, others wealth,
Few care to know the laws of health,
Since now a cold or e'en consumption

Is cured by quackopathic gumption;
So that 'twould seem—folks need not die,
If they'd have faith enough, and try
A turn or two with old Paul Caster,
Or Fry, the traveling rubbing-master,
A little of the true elixir,
Distilled by Ayers, or a stick, sir,
Of Brown's or Wakefield's sure-cure candy;
With now and then a snort of brandy
To keep the stomach right, and quiet
Their trembling nerves; and use for diet,
Fresh Graham bread, unsalted butter;
And go to bed without their supper,—
Eschewing tea and coffee too,
As all good Christians ought to do.

They will not die before their time,
And should they, it will be no crime,
For theirs will be a natural death,—
That is—they'll die for want of breath.
'Tis quite refreshing, too, to know,
That should we die, we're not to go
Straight down to hell, or purgatory;
Since that old dreadful Bible story
About an endless roasting place
Is but a myth;—for by the grace
Of Henry Ward—it has been shown
To be "non est";—at least 'tis known,
That on a certain day assigned,
As per announcement, you will find
This champion, orthodox divine
Did then and there, in Plymouth's shrine,
By logic, argument, and wit,
Quite knock the bottom out of it,
And let the fire and brimstone out,
To flow promiscuously about.

Of late it has been proven true,
On strictly scientific view,
By Darwin, Huxley, Bain & Co.,
That in the past, aeons ago,
By law of evolution rose
The human race primordial,—those
Who had the honor first to be
Our proto-types and ancestry,—
Being apes, baboons, and chimpanzee.
Their proto-types in turn they trace
By honored links of time and place
(The "fittest" always cropping out,
As land-marks on this devious route)
Till, step by step and link by link,
They bring us to that curious brink—
Where lo! the arch that spans the chasm—
Creation, sprung from protoplasm!

The electric spark of reformation
Has fired the women of the nation;
And they, with patriotic zeal,
Speak boldly what they seem to feel:—
That 'tis their duty, and their right,
To rise en masse, and, in their might,
Assert equality with man,
As Eve did when the world began;
Proving with logical precision,
That their opinions and decision
Are none the less to be regarded,
Because they've been by man discarded.
Already have they formed the plan
To vote and rule, compeers with man,
In courts and councils to preside
As honored judges, and decide
On points of law, and make decrees

To govern navies on the seas;
In learnéd eloquence hold forth,
As did Demosthenes, till North,
South, East, and West in transport rise,
And, with one voice, award the prize
Of vict'ry to the brave and fair;
While lawyers strain their eyes and stare,
In mute astonishment and awe,
To see young ladies practice law.

And now, ye fair, adieu, adieu,
Till I in after life meet you,
Men's equal, as no doubt you'll be,
Armed for the contest cap-a-pie,—
With nervéd arm the sword to wield
In conflict on the battle field;—
Or in the bishop's lawn appearing,
With mercy's voice, the saddened cheering;
Or sitting on the judgment-seat,
Where criminals their sentence meet;
Or, with scalpel and lance in hand,
Making the circuit of the land,
To dry up tears, and silence groans,
By pulling teeth and setting bones;
Inspecting tongues where fever lingers,
Feeling the pulse with female fingers;
Giving to young bairns senna, squills,
To little girls mere sugar pills,
To young men allopathic doses
Combined with aroma of roses.
Oh! who would grudge a little pain
To be restored to health again,
By means so mild, mid scenes so bright,
'Neath eyes that beam with mercy's light!

What joyous times we then shall see,
When Cady Stantons you'll all be,

And women shall, as Nature teaches,
O'er men bear rule and wear the breeches.
And men, in turn, shall seize the broom,
Don pinafores and sweep the room,—
And, should one chance to come along,
The baby soothe with gentle song,
Or, should its cries distressing be,
Give placebos of catnip tea,—
The stockings darn, the butter churn. . . .
Thus, wrong-side out, we'll all things turn;
So doing, 'twill be plain to see
What vast improvement it will be
On that old antiquated plan,
Which Heaven of yore ordained for man.

THE MODERN CODE

No one so well as he who wears the boot,
Can tell how much it gall or pinch the foot;
No one can know so well as he who feels,
How much injustice from his honor steals,
Or filches from his hard-earned dues and claim,
To boost some favorite up to wealth or fame.

How often in life's struggle do we find
That modest merit comes out far behind;
While brazen impudence and selfish greed
Insure a certain prospect to succeed.
"There is a tide in the affairs of men,"
Said Mr. Shakespeare, and we say again,
(Men praise what others praise, or right or
wrong,)
Once gain the current you'll be pushed along;
Have wealth and honors thrust on you beside,
Though but a shyster, so you keep the tide.

No one believes, except the honest fool,
That men grow rich, who keep the golden rule;—
That honest merit or that modest worth
Are prized at half their value on this earth.
Keep what you've got, take all the rest you can,
The ruling passion and chief end of man;
Keep others back, or pull them down, if need,
From off the ladder, that you may succeed.
Consult nobody's feelings but your own,
This world, in chief, was made for you alone;
No other's honor's half so nice and dear
As is your own—an axiom very clear.

Conscience is educatable, you know;
So train it in the way you wish it go;
Nor let it give you any great concern,
'Tis quite elastic and will serve your turn.
The unfortunate and orphan, turn away;
Be gen'rous only where you're sure 'twill pay.
Give to the church a liberal supply,
To pay through purgatory when you die.
As for the rest, laud preachers to the skies
Who strike out hell and leave you paradise.
Amass a fortune so that when you rot,
Your name shall shine without a stain or spot
Upon a gorgeous shaft of Parian stone,
Coupled with many virtues—not your own.
'Twill be a pleasant pastime for the poor,
That you have wronged or turned from out your door,
Or some unfortunate you once oppressed,
To stop and contemplate and read with zest.

Your friends will bless you that you are no more,
And soon will squander what you left in store;—
Will grieve—for what your splendid funeral cost,
Much more than for the selfish friend they lost.

Thus endeth the "code," and my song is sung;
"Let the galled jade wince whose withers are wrung."

BRASS VERSUS BRAINS

Who e'er expects to win himself a name,
Achieve distinction, and be known to fame,
Must be supplied with impudence and sham—
Merit with these,—no value worth a damn.
A brazen cheek, good clothes, and dashing air
Are better passports, almost anywhere,
Than modest merit, of whatever phase,
Blushing and shrinking from the public gaze.
Assert with confidence your claims and cause,
If from the public you would win applause.
Assumed importance, self-esteem, and brass
Will win you friends, though you are but an ass.

The public favorites, whom the people cheer,
Claim as your own associates most dear,—
Your cherished friends by ties of genius bound,
By which they hold you in respect profound.
Reflected honor is your meed and due,
No matter though they never heard of you.
Blow your own horn, sound well your praise
abroad,
E'en though the envious call you cheat and fraud,
Ninety will credit you with all you claim
Where ten will question of your worth or fame.
In conversation self should be your theme,—
'Tis inexhaustible, and aids your scheme
To keep yourself before the public view,
Besides of interest intense—to you,—
And hence, a theme most apt to call you out,
Your hearers silence, or put them to rout.

Be sure to tell all you have seen or done,
Nor slight self-praise for deeds and vict'ries won.

Since truth is not essential all the time,
Hyperbole is not looked on as crime.
Indulge in fiction, when it suits your case,
'Twill tarnish not the metal of your face,
But add an extra lustre to the same,
And help to boost you up to rank and fame.
Should you desire of fame an extra yield,
Buy a commission in the lecture field,
The bureaus will supply you on demand,
And puff you up as something very grand,
Intensely funny, eloquent, profound,
Or lachrymose and orthodoxly sound,
Sensational, pathetic, or sublime—
Whatever role you choose, to suit the time.

Procure the service of some man with brains,
To write your thesis up with care and pains;
Engagements will pour in from every source,
To see and hear the famous star—of course.
Then with electrotype and flaming bill,
Go forth to reap a harvest at your will.
Your audience, by courtèsy constrained,
Will all declare—they have been entertained.
Brass wins the day, achieves both wealth and fame,
While Brains plods on in poverty and shame;—
Since honor, fame, from such conditions rise,
'Tis worse than folly—to be learned or wise.

MOSQUITOES—A PARODY

"Oft in the stilly night,
Ere slumber's chain hath bound me,"
I hear their shriek, and feel their bite,
Mosquitoes all around me.
Their "zips," too near, assail my ear;
No words of love are spoken.
I wish the last one dead and gone,
Their peakéd heads all broken.
Thus, "in the stilly night,
Ere slumber's chain hath bound me,"
When I would read and write,
Mosquitoes buzz around me.

When I remember all
Their stings and taunts together,
I pray to see them fall
Like hail, in summer weather.
I watch to see one 'light alone,
His banquet-hall deserted,
That I may shed his blood, so red,
That from my veins departed.
Thus, "in the stilly light,"
But little slumber finds me.
If I attempt to read or write,
The damned things nearly blind me.

Sometimes they rendezvous
At a respectful distance;
Then I prepare anew
Fresh weapons of resistance.
If, in the night, there comes respite,

I start on my devotion.—
"Now I lay me"—"zip"—they slay me.
I stop and change my notion.
For, "should I die, before I wake,"
Both soul and body they would take.
Thus "in the stilly night,"
I pray to be defended;
And wage anew the bloody fight,
Before my prayer is ended.

So wanes the weary night,
Quite trying to devotions;
As well it puts to flight
All staid, poetic notions.
I'd make my song more stanzas long
With much pure sense to grace it,
But, while I rhyme, their wings mark time
And music—I must face it.
I would not "fill a coward's grave,"
Nor "be so base as be a slave";
Nor would I "turn and flee,"
But rather fight, till broad daylight
Shall gladly set me free.
And so, my friends, good night!
May nets and bars surround you,
Shield you from every bite,
Nor let their stinging wound you.

DR. LEATHERHEAD'S SOLILOQUY

I scarce could realize what was to pay,
I found myself grown famous in a day!
The papers gave it as a solemn fact,
That I was popular and never lacked
For patronage and friends; and that success
And fortune came, my humble lot to bless.
I pondered on it—how it came to be—
While there were older, wiser men than me,
That I should be thus singled out by name
As only worthy such especial fame!
What had I ever done to make me great,
Successful, and accomplished, as they state?
And then I thought there must be some mistake;
For those more skilful surely never make
Such blunders, failures, and erroneous guess,
As I have done, too oft, I must confess.
Or was it all but some delusive dream,
And am I not so famous as I seem?
Yet, there it stands, inscribed in printer's ink.
When they see this, what will the people think
Has happened to me, or has come to pass,—
Me, whom they counted but a stupid ass?
They'll praise me now without restraint or stint.
A name's a name, although there's nothing in't.
With sense—or no sense, it is just as well,
When doctors' leather-heads are made to swell.
And, if I kill or cure—'tis all the same,
The daily press will puff me up to fame.
The only drawback that I see in store—
And that's a thorn that galls me very sore—

Is that some yellow opposition sheet
Will show me up, as I deserve,—a cheat.
But, if it does, I'll boot somebody good,
Just as a pious, noted doctor should.
If that won't do, I'll—what is that you say?
The editor was drunk the other day,
And wrote those locals in hilarious spree,
To satirize my work and cheapen me?
Well, that's the end of strut and blow and boast,
And thus my fame turns out—a whisky ghost!

ASPIRATION

Respectfully Dedicated to the "Educational School-Bored."

I'd like to be a school-ma'am and with the school-ma'ams stand,
With curls upon my forehead, a hickory in my hand;
There, with the little hoodlums that couldn't read or write,
I'd make the sweetest music and flay them left and right.

Oh, wouldn't it be jolly to make them squirm and bawl,
For whittling desks and benches, and marking up the wall;
Or making naughty faces behind their slates and books,
Reflecting on the teacher by such un-Christian looks.

Those, chewing gum and whisp'ring, I'd stand upon the floor,
And make it somewhat warmer behind them than before.
The gamins who threw spit-balls at me or at my desk,
I'd make of them examples that would terrorize the rest.

For every crooked pin I saw or felt upon my chair,

I'd give a season ticket to the culprit then and there;
I'd play the very dickens with those who kissed the girls,
Or ogled those across the room who wore the nicest curls.

Whenever they used slang words, or took my name in vain,
I'd demonstrate upon their backs the moral law so plain,
They'd think the day of judgment or that Old Nick had come,
And so would be convicted, if not converted some.

With mild and Christian firmness, I'd confiscate their trash,
Nuts, candies, apples, jack-knives, and all such balderdash,
'Twould put me in good humor, and sweeten all my cares—
Replenish my exchequer, in such knickknacks and wares.

Yes, I'd rather be a school-ma'am, than with th' angels stand,
'Twould make me look important and feel so very grand.
Besides, to be an angel, one first would have to die,
And crowns are quite expensive, and harps exceeding high.

To die is inconvenient, and then I might not be
Quite sure of my election among the orchestry;
So, on mature reflection, there seems a better show
For me to be promoted somewhere down here below.

And, now I've had "my say so," and told my great
desire
To be a mistress school-ma'am, and how I would
aspire,
The "Bored of Education," I hope, will duly see
The beauty of my system and make a place for me.

They cannot be so stupid, in these enlightened
times,
As not to see the justness and logic of my rhymes.
I therefore think it settled, beyond a shade of
doubt
That, whether Tilden was or not, they will not
count *me* out.

A Reply from a School-ma'am

There are many thousand school-ma'ams, who in
the school-room stand,
With curls upon their forehead, but no hickory in
their hand;
But who find no difficulty in o'ercoming infant
guile
With no other help to aid them than a kind and
pleasant smile.

Author's Reply

I'm very glad to hear it said, by one who's had her
say,
So many thousand school-ma'ams smile success-
fully all day.
It makes me wish I were again a little boy
awhile—
Just long enough to take it in—that long and
numerous smile.

Oh, wouldn't it be glorious, from morning until night,
To see their brows without a frown, no hickory in sight!
And then to know they'd never let "their angry passions rise,"
"I'd bid farewell to every fear and wipe my weeping eyes."

I wouldn't longer be afraid to kiss Miss Susan Jane,
For I would know 'twould only make my teacher smile again;
And, as for Sue, she wouldn't care, but like as any way,
Would dare me with a pleasant smile, to take it back next day.

And then *I'd* smile, in fact we'd have a very smiling school,
Where everything was governed by a very smiling rule;
We'd think our tribulations, then, and trials all were past,
And that the day of jubilee had really come at last.

Pleasant smiles of satisfaction would everywhere abound,
Our voices, too, in thankfulness should swell the joyful sound;
Old hats and caps, promiscuous, would likely fill the air,
For, when "we boys" got under way, "there'd be no sorrow there."

Yours beats my system all to smash, so far as
smiling goes,
It takes away the "crown of thorns" and substi-
tutes the rose;
So, after all is said and done, I like your system
best,
Where nary wave of trouble rolls across the peace-
ful breast.

I mean to let the hickories, then, grow up to fish-
ing poles,
While you by pleasant smiles direct the little
hoodlums' souls,
In the pleasant paths of virtue as well in wisdom's
ways,
In which are honor, peace, and joy, and also
length of days.

I therefore hope to see you smile, and in the
school-room stand,
Until some smiling chap turns up, and takes you
by the hand;
And swears to be, through thick and thin, *"Yours
truly"* all his life,
And then I hope that you may prove—a smiling
angel—wife.

THE SANCTIFIED HYPOCRITE

Did you ever hear tell of a hypocrite saint?
Or, to draw it more mild, were you ever acquaint
With a meek-visaged fellow, whose chief stock in trade
Were the lies that he lived and the long prayers he made?

Then, if not, I'll describe him as near as I can:
He is what you might term a self-sanctified man;—
Talks as glibly of Heaven as if he'd been there,
And knew every street, mansion, palace, and square.

What is more, had bespoken the best in the place,
To accord with his piety, merits, and grace;
And had sent on directions to have it prepared,
Furnished up with appointments, the best to be spared.

He's the pink of perfection in morals and grace,
To judge by his long-winded prayers and meek face;
Never smiles at a witticism, bon mot, or joke,
Lest the thirteenth commandment be slighted or broke.

Quotes Paul and St. John with such unction and zest
On every occasion, you'd think he possessed
Inspiration distilled, or afflatus divine,
Sufficient to ballast a ship of the line;

Has a passage of scripture to fit every case,
Just to show how degenerate the poor human race
Has become since suppressing the thumb-screw
and rack,
Putting science and reason, instead, on the track.

For those who would question a word of his text,
When they get through with this world and go to
the next,
He rejoices that ample provision is made,
In a climate red-hot, minus water and shade.

At a bargain he's sharp as a two-edgéd sword,
For which he is thankful and praises the Lord.
Although he esteems "filthy lucre" a curse,
Yet he keeps his eye peeled and looks out for his
purse.

He is generous and free—when he knows it will
pay,
So he gives at a time when it makes a display.
This agrees with the text or the passage divine,
"Not to hide in a bushel, but let your light shine."

He belongs, or rings in, with that privileged class,
That at all entertainments expect a free pass.
Does he ride in the stage-coach, the steamboat, or
train,
His immaculate piety serves him again.

He usurps the best seat with most scrupulous care,
Though some poor devil stand who has paid his
full fare,
Or, some shabby-dressed woman must beat a re-
treat,
Content, if by chance, she secures a back seat.

No favors too great for his conscience and worth;
'Tis his due to be patronized here upon earth;
Nor is he content with gratuities past,—
He expects a free ride into Heaven, at last;

Expects to receive on his advent up there,
A free serenade from the angelic choir;
Fine linen and purple, bespangled with gold,
And a crown of rare gems, worth millions untold.

I have sketched but the outlines by which you may
know,
When you meet with this saint of the "genus
homo."—
I omit minor details which you may supply,
If perchance you should meet in the sweet bye
and bye.

JOHN SMITH

John Smith was born, it matters not
In what particular place or spot,—
Suffice it here, that he was born,
Else had we chose another horn
Of the dilemma in the case,
Whereon to hang our tale, and trace
The aspirations of a mind,
For something higher, more defined,
Than common place, and common name—
For notoriety and fame.

But John, like any other Smith,
Was born and therefore not a myth,
But bona fidé flesh and blood,
Transmitted ever since the flood,
From sire to son; as well the same,
Is true of his ancestral name.
Of such a lineage and descent,
Who would not boast to be content?
Or, who, with such a patronym,
Would not be pleased and proud like him?
If any such has been, or is,
His tastes were quite unlike to his,
For no one can assert that he
Was ever known from infancy
To seek, by legislative act,
To cover up or change the fact,
Of name, descent, or pedigree,
Or to ignore his ancestry,
So well he loved and prided in
His patronymic origin.

Of omens, signs, or portents dread,
We know but little, though 'tis said,
When John was born, the roosters crowed,
Which, as a presage, plainly showed,
That he, thus ushered on the scene,
Should be no common go-between;
But bear as proud and high a crest,
As any 'mong the brave and best.

Nor, did his parents fail to see
The import of this augury;
And its importance press upon
The mind of their young hopeful John.
For doting parents, always kind,
Are never slow to seek and find
The promise and the potency,
Of something brilliant yet to be,
In their belovéd progeny,
And, bearing too, this fact in mind—
"The tree is, as the twig, inclined,"
They lose no opportunity
Or means, however slight they be,
To stimulate the tender twig,
And give it bent, before too big.
This they neglected not to do
With John, and, hence, no doubt 'tis true,
That this auspicious augury
Much helped to shape his destiny.
For many are the stories told
Of feats performed ere two years old.
Ev'n thus, in early infancy,
As he sat on his mother's knee,
T'was something wonderful to see
This young incipient prodigy,
Clap both his hands, in mimic show,
And give a lusty, vigorous *crow!*

But time would fail, and space as well,
His many childish freaks to tell.
As time wore on, he grew apace,
And frocks and pinafores gave place
To little pants and roundabouts,
And puling cries, to romp and shout,
And merry racket, din, and hum,
With hobby-horse, tin horn, and drum.
But childhood, too, has many woes—
Cut fingers, falls, and stubbéd toes,
The measles, mumps, and chicken-pox,
Street-fights, hair-pulling, and hard knocks,
Which is a game called "give and take."—
Sometimes an awful stomach-ache
Will bring a whimper, bawl, or whine,
In cherry and green-apple time.

All these of course, our hero bore,
And many ills beside them, more,
And 'scaped alive, without a flaw,
With still "some sand left in his craw"—
That is with courage, pluck, and grit,
Which, added to his mother-wit,
Made a foundation, sure and strong,
On which to build his whole life long,
A super-structure, proud and great,
An honor both to church and state.

His youth was squared by common rule;
The public and the Sunday-school
Being common factors in the case,
Each in its stated time and place,
Expressed in algebraic phrase:—
X equals number of school days,
Y ditto spent in prayer and praise,

Z equals product, X and Y,
Terms giv'n to find solution by.
We state the problem plain and clear,
But will not stop to solve it here;—
'Tis worked by that familiar rule,
We all once practiced when at school.
Suffice to say, John worked it through,
The best he could, the best he knew,
Although it took him many years,
And cost X threshings, Y of tears.
At length the summit is achieved,
And he is proud to be relieved
From books and slate and tasks that bore
His spirit down in days before.
And so his trials end at last,
His school days numbered with the past,
The catechism laid aside
No more to scourge his youthful pride.

All that remains is to display
His powers on exhibition day,
Surprise his hearers, all and each,
With John Smith's graduation speech;
Receive their plaudits and bouquets
With usual compliments and praise.
That long-awaited, looked-for day,
Which always seemed so far away,
At last arrived, as always must,
All future days of hope and trust,
As well as those, that others pray
In vain, may tarry far away.

The school hall had been decked in green,
With mottoes wrought upon the scene,
In taste unique by clever skill,
Expressing "Welcome" and "Good-will,"

Or love of learning, science, arts,
The work of willing hands and hearts.
A platform, too, of boards was laid,
And every preparation made
To hear John Smith's farewell address,
And make th' event a grand success.

And he was cheerful, happy, gay,
As if illumined by a ray
Or flame of some electric light,
His eyes e'en sparkled with delight.
Dressed up in all his Sunday best,
He wore a collar and white vest,
(For John was grown almost a man,
Since this our story first began.
He even nursed and prided in
A few stray hairs upon his chin),
A gay neck-tie adorned his throat,
And, on the lapel of his coat,
Appeared a buttonhole bouquet,
(A present from his girl, they say).
His hair was of a sandy shade,
And duly plastered with pomade,
Which kept it sleek and well-confined,
Not being of the frizzy kind,—
Complexion—"rat and tan," in spots,
That is, dispersed were little dots
Or speckles of a deeper hue,
Which mostly to the sun were due.
Thus, trig and neat, so spick and span,
John looked him every inch a man!
The audience gathered in apace,
And every pupil was in place,
When, at the tinkle of a bell,
All noise, as if by magic spell,
Or quick transition of a dream,

Was hushed, and order reigned supreme.
The entertainment then began,
In order as the program ran;
But chief among them all, was he,
Who had the *valedictory,*—
John Smith, the hero of the day,
Our noted friend and protégé!
All eyes were turned upon him now,
As he came forth and made his bow.

A subtle tremor seemed to shoot
Through every limb, from head to boot,—
His heart seemed leaping in his mouth—
He could not tell the North from South,
For everything seemed whirling round,
As all his senses to confound.
At last, a slight spasmodic cough
Supplied an impulse to start off.
He went a round or too so fast,
The breath he had, gave out at last;
Before he caught another one,
The words he wished to say were gone;
A little prompting set him right,
And reassured him from his fright,
So, soon was fairly under way,
And making quite a fine display.
But, though he had his piece by heart,
He soon again forgot his part!—

He smole a smile and wunk a wink,
Then scratched his head, and thunk a think;
But quite in vain, as every thought
That came was not the one he sought.—
Just then his *natal omen* flashed
Across his mind,—no more abashed
Or disconcerted after that,

Nor, does his heart beat pit-a-pat;
And now his 'piece' returns once more,
As clear to mind as just read o'er.
Then "Richard is himself again"
And, in a loftier, bolder strain,
Recites his valedictory through,
Bids teacher and schoolmates adieu.
And, when his peroration closed,
Not one in all his audience dozed!
But wide awake, and ready still
To testify their great good will,
More markedly than they had before,
In fact, it was a clear encore!
Upon the graduation plan,
John Smith was now a learnéd man,
As his diploma did attest—
"John Smithus approbatus est,
Amor cum diligentia
Pro bona sapientia"!

Now, on the bar his mind is bent,
He pores o'er Blackstone, Story, Kent,
Wades through a mass of musty lore,
By various authors half a score;
Attends the town debating club,
To give his eloquence a rub;
Imagines he has vanquished all
Antagonists, both great and small,
And fadeless laurels borne away,
By his grandiloquent display
Of logic, argument, and lore,
Such as was never heard before.
The smiles and titters, nods and winks,
The audience give,—this hopeful thinks
As demonstrations, all and each,
Applaudits of his maiden speech.

Elate with hope and fond desires,
Such as a first success inspires,
Honors and fame and many a prize
Before his mental vision rise,
Which he expects to bear away,
Some glorious Independence Day,
When he, as orator profound,
Shall to the multitude expound
With thrilling eloquence the thought—
The boon for which our grandsires fought,
For seven long years, by night and day,
In many a hard contested fray,
And when at last the sword was sheathed,
To us the mighty boon bequeathed.
Search through the records of all time,
A theme more fruitful, more sublime,
Could not be found to link his name,
John Smith Esquire, with honor, fame!
Or where Committee hope to find,
Than his, a more aspiring mind,—
Or orator that could so well,
As he, the thrilling story tell?

John oft indulged in dreams like these,
And reckoned up his future fees,
When, as a lawyer, he could win
Case after case, until within
The limits of his native state,
None could be found so rich or great.
Nor should these day-dreams, though so fair,
Prove only castles in the air,
But trophies of his power and might,
And sensible to touch and sight.

So John resolved, affirmed, and vowed,—
Both mentally and out aloud—

And some assert—he even swore,
By that same cock that crowed of yore.
At last the day of trial came,
That should decide his future fame.

He had determined to report
At session of the Circuit Court,
As candidate for licensee,
And honor of his law degree.
The judge, with many questions, plies
The anxious aspirant, and tries
To make him waver, squirm, and quake,
And catch himself in some mistake.

John ran the gauntlet, fair and square,—
Without much margin, though, to spare.
"The cock that fights and gets away,
Will live to fight another day";
At least he stands a better show
Than does the one that cannot crow.
The solemn judge without delay
Issue his brief auto-da-fé;
Which elevates John Smith, per se,
At least in feelings, one degree,
Creates him without crack or flaw,—
"Attorney, Counselor-at-Law."
Quite competent to write a brief,
Or bring his client's purse to grief,
To draw a deed, and frame a will,
Or his own empty pockets fill,
To counsel clients, man or wife,
To promote fees and legal strife,
To manage an estate-at-heir,—
To get and keep the lion's share.

John then decided to display
His legal sign without delay.

He gave the painter special charge
To make the letters extra large;
In variegated colors, too,
Black, green, and pink, red, white, and blue,
That they fail not to catch the eye
Of every person passing by.
Th' effect of this unique design
Would be immense, and something more,
When hung above his office door!
He lay awake the entire night,
In contemplating with delight
His name and title thus displayed
Upon this sign when first 'twas made.
No sooner was it fairly swung
Upon the crane, where it was hung,
Than every person stopped to stare
And wonder at the odd affair.

From out the key-hole of his door,
John watched them, as they read it o'er,
And carefully scanned every face,
To see if he might guess or trace,
By the expression, pictured there,
Just how they took this great affair.—
Ah! who among them all might be
The first to tender him a fee!
And what 'twould be when it took place,
A larcenee, or murder case?
Perhaps assault and battery?
Or arson in the first degree?
Or other dark and evil deed?

But hold! he sees one stop and read,—
A stranger with an ugly face,
And villainy in ev'ry trace

So plainly stamped, he needs not tell
His guilt, which John can read too well.
But what avails to lawyer's sense,
His client's guilt or innocence!
So that the fee is amply large,
It matters little—what the charge.

John kept these principles in view,
As he observed the stranger, through
The key-hole of his office door,
With great expectancy in store.
Nor waited long in such a frame,
Before the ugly villain came,
With little modesty or grace,
Straight to consult him on his case;
And without more ado or plan,
Accosted him and thus began:—
"Wie geht's, mein freund,—I shust makes oudt
Vat all dose baintings bees aboudt.
Bist du der barber von der blace,
Vat schaves der beoples mit der vace?
Mein beart it gets me most zu brave,
Unt dinks I better haff ein schave.
I vas go by, mit out der sthreet,
Unt schust vas dinkings, ven I meet
Dot sign, vare I should look zu fint
Egzactly sometings off dis kint."

John was dumfounded—past compare,
He stamped, he raved, and tore his hair!
Forgot his catechism, swore
Such awful oaths, as ne'er before,
Were ever heard within a court—
Too monstrous even to report!
He scared the Dutchman half to death,
And only paused for want of breath.

Exhausted so, he could no more,
Except to gasp, point to the door,
And hoarsely shout, or mutter—"Go!"
The trembling Dutchman answers—"So!"
And suits the action to the word,
Fast as his limbs and strength afford;
Nor did he slack his speed before
He left behind ten miles or more!

John now thought law was all a sham,
Not worth a carnal tinker's damn!
If once this thing were known in court,
He would be made the butt and sport
Of every lawyer in the place,
'Twould cause him shame, if not disgrace.
A barber-shop, forsooth! and he
Mistaken for a tonsoree!
"And is this all there is of fame,
A diff'rence only in the name?
'Twixt one who shaves and clips your hairs,
And one who shaves and clips your heirs?"
Such lucubrations fill his mind
And make him more than half inclined
To quit the law in deep disgust,
And in the future, put his trust
In statesmanship and politics—
In that—there'd be no barber's tricks.

The more he thought the matter o'er,
He wondered that he ne'er before
Had thought or hit upon the plan,
To run himself for—Congressman!
His watch-word should be chosen well,—
Sic:—"Bound for Washington or—Hell!"

YOUTHFUL POEMS

TAKING NOTES ON ONE OF PROF. FOSTER'S LECTURES.

The Devil take such notes as these,
That I may have a moment's peace!
Such paltry themes to write upon,
They're neither de, nor pro, nor con.
And then, I'm sure the De'il hi' sel'
Would never want such things in hell.
For what I've writ is prosy matter,
And pencilled 'mid a thundering clatter
Of rumpling paper, scratching pencils,
Atwood machines, and Jack's utensils.
A hundred questions asked at once,
By some unthinking, careless dunce,
Who wants to know what Jack said last,
And trembles lest his day is past,
For taking Max, and standing first
Upon the roll, but fears the worst,
That he has lost his Phi Bete key,
And that a bootlick he must be
Henceforth, or on that awful scroll
He stands *the last*—I mean the roll.
But as for me, I will foreswear
And save myself such useless care.
Before I'd write such paltry stuff,
Of which I now have quite enough,
I'd take my rocking-chair and pipe
And write about disease, or gripe,
Or graceful rings and curling smoke.
In short I would the muse invoke
To help me write old Jack's dull lecture
Which seems to me a dismal spectre:—

About inertia, wheels, and friction,
Fraught with many a strange prediction,
Concerning *weights* and *falling bodies,*
But leaves out brandy, punch, and toddies,
For reasons quite unknown to me,—
But then perhaps *he* loves a spree,
Or leaves such things to Doctor Nott,
Who says that all will go to pot
Who use tobacco, wine, or gin,
Or patronize the Devil's Inn;—
In short all those who spree at nights,
Eat oyster stews, or get in fights,
Or disobey the laws of college,
Where students come to grow in knowledge.—
Have patience, Sir, I'll tell you next
About Jack's lecture and his text,
And then, perhaps, the last of all—
The *laws* that govern things *that fall.*

THE WANDERER'S HOME

When, in the dim futurity of years,
We view life's scenes and contemplate its fears,
We wander forth in search of some lone bower,
In which to pass, content, the pensive hour
Where silence reigns and Nature seems to smile.
The distant landscape and the moss-grown pile,
From toil and care and busy life remote,
The feathered songsters blending tuneful note,
And Fancy giving view to towering pine;
The rocks and cliffs where grows the mountain thyme,
The flowery meadows, wafting rich perfume,
And insects glad, that with the lark commune,
The pebbly brooks meandering through the grove,
Teach man to think, and man to live and love.
Oh blest retreat! thou paradise below!
There would I live, there would I wish to go.
I'd linger long amid a scene like this,
Where Nature speaks of wisdom, virtue, bliss,
Admiring Nature wheresoe'er I trod;
Admiring Nature,—worship Nature's God.

THE ROSE

He that would have the summer rose,
Must pluck the thorn that on it grows.

ON SOME EARLY FLOWERS

Rest here, ye sweet remembrances of early spring,—
Thy faded loveliness shall have a charm

And eloquence, to tell to other minds,
Which may perchance be led to think on thee,
In future time,—a tale of other days;
The days of early spring, long past away,
When all around seemed bright and fair like thee;
Where, on each budding bough, the wild birds sang
And filled the balmy air with notes of love.
Thy reign is short, thy beauty soon may fade,
And soon shall pass away, like youthful days,
Alas! too quickly gone, and leave behind,
Like early spring, the joys of brighter days.

DECISION

Thou cloud of terror, gather all thy power,
Call vengeance to thy aid, and care, and grief,
And disappointment with her somber train;
Then, with thy marshalled hosts, prepare for war;
I'll meet thee with a calm and steady mind.
Far in the field, where valor fought, we'll meet,
And hand to hand decide the victory.
Decision, only, is my ally here,
And should I yield the battle to thy power,
And thou come off victorious in the field,—
Then let my sun of life forever set—
I'll have the name of—"victory or death."

COLLEGE LIFE

Impromptu at a Smoker.

A college life's the life for me,
With oft a happy, glorious spree,
When life is burdened not by care
But all is free and light as air.

A college life's the life for me,
It has so much of jollity;
With books and Profs. we pass the day,
At evening, smoke dull care away.

Then come to college, all who wish
To spend a happy life of bliss;
For wisdom lies in ancient page,
To please the youth and cheer old age.

Refrain

A college life's the life for me,
A college student I would be.

LOVE

There's music in the simple words of love
That charms the cold and hardened heart of stone;
Such words as flow from angels' harps above
Teach man to live and love, but not *alone*.

VALENTINE—TO MISS HARRIETTE

To thee, fair lady, I would dedicate
These few, poor, trembling lines which I now write;
Perhaps, to thee, the purport may be dull,
But then, it speaks the language of the heart.
Long have I gazed on thee, as some bright star
That ever decks the spangled vault of heaven,
And listened to thy gentle voice, entranced,
Like dulcet notes of some aeolian harp.
But 'twas not thy enchanting grace, alone,
That bound my heart a willing slave to thee;
Thy bright and sparkling genius hath a charm
That tells of mental worth which never fades.
(Think not, thou fair one, that I flatter thee.)

I know thou'rt far above my humble lot—
Yet, I have ventured here to tell to thee
A few brief thoughts that ever haunt my heart.

Together, let us roam the hills and vales,
And breathe the fragrance of the mountain air;
And, when the Sun-god from meridian heights
Looks down, retire to bowers and rural shades,
And talk of by-gone days, and golden days
That yet will crown us, when we two are one.
And then, when duty called me from thy side,
I'd go with willing heart to earn my prize.
I'd bring the rich rewards of cheerful toil
To thee, who maketh all my cares a joy.
O speak, thou fair one, that it may be so—
I pray—accept me for thy Valentine!

LOVE AND HARRIETTE

'Tis sweet to muse at dawn of day
  Along the murmuring stream;
Here, Nature strikes a joyous note,
  And bids us love and dream.

'Tis sweet at noon to steal away
  Amidst the silent grove;
The shades diminish heat and toil—
  The sunshine lights up love.

'Tis sweet at setting sun to mark
  The crimson of the sky;
But sweeter far, thy blush of love,
  The sparkle of thine eye.

O charming lady, let me hope
  To be forever thine,
That I may ever live in love,
  Thy faithful Valentine.

ON RECEIVING A MINIATURE OF HARRIETTE

Impress of beauty and of love!
  In thee I now can trace
The lineaments of her I love,
  And see her face to face.
Farewell, dear one, since we must part—
  My journey's soon to start—
I'll bear thine image *near* my heart,
  Thy mem'ry *in* my heart.

But, no! methinks I hear thee say
  Farewell is never said
By those who part but for a day,
  But chanted o'er the dead.
Then, let it be that good old word,
  That speaketh from the eye,
And this shall bind, with one accord,
  Our hearts,—dear girl,—*Good-bye!*

TO A BUTTERFLY

Thou gayest insect of earth's joyous spring,
Go hide thyself amid yon rosy bowers,
Where Love and Innocence forever dwell,
Fit subjects of companionship for thee.

TO HARRIETTE

If e'er, by chance, in coming years,
  I'm pondering o'er the joyous past,
I'll give to Time life's idle fears,
  And draw, instead, love made to last.

Those thoughts of youthful joy and pleasure
  All lead to one bright entity;
For life was like a golden treasure
  I guarded—just to give to thee.

WOMAN

Man, the self-arbiter of all the earth,
Has placed himself in royal state to sway
The iron rod and sceptre over all.
Vast forests bow themselves before his power,
And cities rise to deck the land instead.
Where once the stately oak her branches reared,
Now lofty spires ascend and pierce the clouds.
The wildest beasts, subservient to his power,
Are now his servants or his idle toys.
He bids defiance to the raging waves,
And rides majestic o'er the mighty deep.
The earth to him doth yield her hidden gems;
The ocean, too, gives up her precious pearls.
He sways the lightning by his magic power,
And holds communion with the rolling spheres.
In short, where'er we go or turn our eyes,
We see displayed his vast controlling will.

Yet, man in all his glory thus arrayed
Must own that *woman* holds the sway of him.
Yes, woman fair! thy lot was chosen not
To fell the forest, and build up the town,
And frame huge landmarks from the ancient rocks,
To tell to nations yet unborn thy worth.
Thou hast a higher, nobler sphere than this,
Thy nature is of modesty and love.
Thou teachest man the finer arts of life,
And soft'nest all his cares by gentle words.
Thou art his only solace when in woe;
In peace thou art the idol of his heart.
Thou guidest him through this deceitful world,
And, when life's ebbing stream is well-nigh spent,

Thou art so kind to linger by his side
And whisper in his ear the thoughts of Heav'n,
And point him to a bright and happy clime,
Where troubles cease and sorrows never come.
Fair Guardian Angel in this world of care!
Without thee, life would be a dreary waste—
A heavy burden and a grief to man!

DISAPPOINTMENT

How vain our hopes and prospects here below,
They bloom awhile, then vanish like the snow;
E'en for a while they seem so bright and fair,
That man might think life needs no other prayer.
But soon the canker of the rose is found,
And then those hopes lie scattered all around.

TO A HUMMING BIRD

Go, joyous bird, improve the golden hours,
And sip the honied sweets from dewy flowers.

THE SILVER STREAM

What nobler theme could occupy my song,
Than thy bright waters, as they dance along
Through woods and brake and narrow winding dell,
Where sports the muse, and fancy loves to dwell;
Where nymphs and fairies and the sylvan train
Join in the chorus and prolong the strain
Of that sweet song, thy murmurings inspire,
And fill th' immortal soul with Nature's fire.

On thy fair banks perennial flowers bloom,
To wreathe the virgin's brow, the poet's tomb.
Thou hast been happily named, thou Silver Stream,
Thou hast a magic like some fairy dream

That holds our willing souls in ecstasy,
And bids our hearts rejoice to gaze on thee.
Methinks, as on thy sparkling flow I gaze,
I read in thee some tale of other days. . . .
Here, on thy banks, the wily Indian strayed,
And wooed in happy love the dusky maid;
Where Nature, rich in beauty, pleased them more
Than artificial pomp or pride or lore;
Or all the mimic arts of foreign climes,
Rich in the mysteries of olden times.
And here, content mid rural scenes, they roam.
The spot that pleases most they call their home.

But mark that proud and valiant warrior now,
He yields to love and plights the sacred vow,
Which makes two happy, willing souls as one,
And proves but true—the battle's lost and won.
And now a noble band is gathered here,
Where hearts grow light and join the welcome
cheer,
The rural dance, the joyful shout and song.
Sing, merry souls, the happy strains prolong;
While, ever and anon, the startled deer
Bounds swiftly from his lair in conscious fear,
Springing unnoticed o'er the hills away,
Nor stops to see what perils backward lay.

The dance continues, till the gentle dawn
Beams with soft radiance o'er the verdant lawn,
Awaking Nature from her sweet repose,
While dew-drops glisten on the opening rose.
And, o'er the eastern hills, the king of day
Drives the last ling'ring shades of night away;
And joyous birds, now cheerful on the wing,
Mount to the lofty skies and gaily sing.

But now, alas! how changed thy scenes of old!
Where now that warrior race, so proud and bold?
The timid deer that sported on thy brink,
And from thy rippling waters came to drink?
O speak, thou ceaseless, murmuring stream, and say,
Have all thy former glories passed away?
Who knows, perchance, as o'er thy banks I tread,
Here rest unknown the ashes of the dead!

But yet—thy scenes are no less joyous now,
Where on thy banks the farmer speeds the plow;
The cottage, nestling in its trees, is seen,
The pleasing landscape, and the meadow green.
Here luxury affords a welcome cheer,
And joy and comfort ever crown the year.
Fain would I rove amid thy beauties long,
And paint thy virtues in my humble song—
For here Apollo might have deigned to rove—
And with thy beauties ever be in love.
But as I leave thee, flowing still the same,
I still admire thy beauties and thy name.
Thy murmur'ngs have a voice which seem to say—
That all things mortal, too, must pass away.

TO MY SISTER WITH A LOCK OF HAIR

No costly pearl, or sparkling diamond rare,
I send to thee,—but 'tis a lock of hair.
Kind sister, will you this remembrance take,
And ever keep it for the giver's sake?

ETERNITY (To Harriette)

There could be no eternity so bright to me
Were it not made more glorious still by thoughts of thee.

A ROMANCE

CLAUDE AND SAPPHIRA

A true story of the olden time.
Digna satis fortuna revisit.

Ere yet propitious war, or chance,
Assigned those vast domains to France—
Once Duke Burgundy's boast and pride,
Composed of many a province wide—
O'er these broad lands, in days of old,
Reigned Charles, Dijon, surnamed The Bold.
Descendant of a royal line,
Most learnéd noble of his time;
Renowned for courtly chivalry,
Honor, and strict integrity,
Quick temper and imperious will;
A Prince that brooked no wrong or ill
Should be committed unredressed,
Whether by subject, peer, or guest.
No sycophant or parasite
Found grace or favor in his sight.

His public court, three times a week,
Was free to all who chose to seek
An audience with their Prince and King,
Or had complaint or charge to bring.
The meanest subject in the land
Could claim protection at his hand,
As well as one of noble blood,
Or any round his throne that stood.
Impartial justice was decreed,
The guerdon of each subject's need.
None ever sought his aid in vain

Who could a righteous cause sustain,
Nor ever had just cause to be
Dissatisfied with his decree.

No braver knight set lance in rest,
Or bore a prouder, haughtier crest.
No sturdier arm than his could wield
A sword or brand on battle-field,
Or bolder strike, as many a foe
At Montlhéry had cause to know.
His numerous wars with hostile France
Attracted many a willing lance.
Some for adventure took up arms;
Some found in war still greater charms.
The clash of swords, the roar and shout
Of vict'ry, as they put to rout
Opposing ranks, were music sweet,
That well-trained soldiers love to greet,
Which cause their hearts to swell with pride,
When on the lucky victor's side.
Some, loyal to their Prince's cause,
As in accord with feudal laws,
Marshalled their bold retainers forth;
Nor prized reward of greater worth
Than, at the close of battle gained,
To hear themselves among those named
For bold exploits and bravery famed.
While some there were—and not a few—
More selfish interests had in view,
Whose patriotism could be bought;
These to promote their fortunes fought.
For such, it mattered little where,
So that they had good pay and fare.

Among the latter, Claude Rhynsault,
A hardy German from Anhalt;

A bold, blunt soldier in the field,
Who knew a trenchant blade to wield;
Could lead a phalanx in a fray,
Or from a siege hew forth his way.
His sturdy courage never failed,
Although by double force assailed.
Well trained in camps, he knew the art
How best to win the Prince's heart,
And, with such skill, he played his part,
(Nor scrupled he by what resort)
As gained for him a place at Court.
The generous, unsuspecting Prince,
Sought how he might the best evince,
As signal of his grateful sense,
A meet regard, and recompense
The honest soldier, as beseemed
Commensurate with what he deemed
Was for his gallant service due,
In his own cause and interest true.
Nor long delayed the honored boon.

From Middelburg in Zélande, soon
Came herald fleet,—sad news he bore:
Their well belovèd Governor,
Sir Ralf Johannes, was no more!
Their capital was plunged in grief
For loss of him, their honored chief.
As well it might, in sooth to tell,
For none might hope, whate'er befell,
One would be found could rule so well.
The Duke, much moved for loss of one
So well beloved by all,—for none
Within that lowland province bore
Escutcheon who deserved it more,—
Deemed none so well as Claude might be
Trusted for strict integrity.

He justly would the office fill
And loyal prove to Zélande's will.
Charles orders that his protégé,
Claude Rhynsault, should, without delay,
Repair to Zélande's capital
With poursuivant and sénéchal,
There, in due form, to be proclaimed
The rightful Governor ordained.

The loyal burghers haste to greet
Their chief, and give him welcome meet;
As well their fealty to evince
In honor of their sovereign Prince.
With one accord and zealous care,
A gorgeous banquet they prepare,
At which their honored guest might see
Their ablest men of high degree.
The fairest beauty of the place,
As well, this princely feast should grace.
When all was done, no fairer scene
In Zélande ever yet was seen.
Song, mirth, and wit, their charms infuse;
Nor was forgot the "timorous muse"—
The minstrel with his harp was there,
To laud the brave and praise the fair
In well-turned verse and roundelay,
Appropriate to the bold and gay.
In mazy dance, the gliding feet
Keep time and pace to music sweet;
Where all so happy, bright, and gay,
They scarcely note time glide away.
Joy reigns supreme in every breast,
Except, alas! one signal guest;
Yet, so disguised that brow, it there,
To outward show, seemed bright and fair,—
Nor token gave that brain within

Had dark designs and deadly sin.
So well dissimulation can
Impose deceit on mortal man.
'Mong all the guests in that gay throng
Not one suspected harm or wrong.

Of all the beauties in that hall,
One shone the brightest of them all.
Not all the lustre art might spare
Could add a charm to one so fair.
Exquisite beauty ne'er did grace
A fairer form or lovelier face,
As every one who saw her felt:—
Sapphira! wife of Paul Danvelt,
A wealthy merchant of the town,
Of good repute and some renown,—
Esteemed by all for sterling worth,
For courtesy and genial mirth,
For manners, gentle and refined,
For generous heart and noble mind.
His fair young wife, but late a bride,
Scarce yet had left her husband's side.
All love and truth and constancy,
She knew no greater joy than be
Close by his side and see him smile
Approvingly and pleased the while.

Such matchless charms and artless grace
Might not remain in such a place
Unnoticed long. Alas, the hour!
That gave those charms that fatal power.
They caught the wily Governor's eye,
Nor did he pass them lightly by.
He sought to lead her in the dance,
But, ere she gave consent, a glance
Bent on her from his lustful eye,

Caused her to pale, and wish to fly
His dreaded presence; yet, escape
Was now too late in any shape.
Refusal would be rude offense
Not lightly pardoned,—might incense
Him, whom she now had cause to fear
Might give her many a pang and tear.
Yet, conscious of her rectitude,
She thought no danger dare intrude
'Mid such a courtly multitude;
So, not to seem too coy or rude,
She took his arm and faintly smiled,
As pure and artless as a child.
Yet, once again, amid the dance,
She saw that ill-foreboding glance.
Alarmed and pale, in vain she tried
Her mortal terror there to hide.
Excuse she made of sudden pain—
Nor did she simulate, or feign
Indisposition, as was plain
To his keen eye and practiced brain.
Conversant, too, with passion's laws,
Full well did he discern the cause,—
Which gave him secret joy to know,
Since it insured that fatal blow.
It showed him that he held a key
That would unlock that treasury,—
If gentle means should fail to win
Indulgence in his plotted sin.
Although well skilled in every art
By which intriguers gain the heart,
He saw that she was true to love,
And pure and constant as the dove.
Yet, though he might not gain her heart,
He saw that fear could make her start,
And blanch her cheek most deadly pale,

Which showed him how he might assail
Her weakest point with such avail,
As would insure his plot from fail.
A sensual mind scarce e'er aspires
Beyond its brutal, low desires.
When uncurbed passion holds the sway
In man, he ill can brook delay,
Nor scruples much by what resort
He gratifies his fiendish sport.
No pity, mercy, love, he shows
For innocence or beauty's woes,—
Returns, instead, for virtue's blight,
Ingratitude as black as night.

Banquets must needs, like sermons, close,
And leave their guests to seek repose
As best they can, or best they may,
In view of thoughts they bear away.
Some leave with pleased and tranquil mind,
Some to complaint are more inclined,
Some seem in wild commotion tossed,
With anchor gone and rudder lost.
What each one feels he best may know—
'Tis not our province here to show.

The fair young bride, in sore distress,
Much questioned whether to confess
Her anxious fears for ill and harm,—
Or were they but a false alarm?
Her dark forebodings might prove vain;
Then, why should she her husband pain—
Or needless cause his mind unrest?
Were it not better, in her breast,
To keep suspicions unexpressed,
Than wrongly cast reproach and shame
Upon their new-made Governor's name?

Thus 'twixt alternate doubt and fear,
She scarcely knew which way to steer.
She did what seemed, of course, the best—
An earnest prayer to Heaven addressed;
Then sought,—what came not,—calm repose.
For, in her sleeping, visions rose,—
A ghastly spectre, gaunt and grim,
In profile not unlike to him,
Stalked to her couch, with outstretched hand,
As if about to give command;
But paused and grinned with horrid leer
And gaping jaw from ear to ear.
One look he cast upon her mate,
Of mingled jealousy and hate,
Then turned on her his ghoulish face,
As if he would, in sooth, embrace.
With start and scream she woke, to find
'Twas but a phantom of the mind;
And yet so vivid did it seem,
She scarce could think it all a dream.

While near the Duke, Claude had repressed
These brutal passions in his breast,
While sordid avarice, in league
With cunning, fraud, and dark intrigue,
Had served his purposes so well,
It were not easy now to tell
To what extent his fortunes grew,
Though they were large, and princely, too;
So well the generous Duke repaid
His signal services and aid.

Though now with ample fortune blest,
His scheming mind was ill at rest,—
No longer checked, or curbed in aught.
Whate'er his wayward fancy sought,

Or passion prompted, though it racked
Some victim fair, he never lacked
Time, opportunity, or means,
To gratify his devilish schemes.
He who aspires to noble ends
Makes choice of honest means and friends;
But one who meditates deep wrong
Seeks pliant tools to help along
Those devious plans and dark designs
To which his vicious soul inclines.
Such instruments Claude pleased to choose,
As suited to his selfish views.
Both officers and servants saw
His wishes were to be their law;
Nor had he any use for such
As dared to question over-much
Affairs in which he chose to be
Sole arbiter and referee.

Meanwhile, he sought by every art
To gain Sapphira's gentle heart.
But all intrigue and arts were vain,
And served to warn her but again
Against the tempter's fatal snare,
Prepared with such address and care.
No entrance to her home he gained,
Nor e'en an interview obtained.
At last, despairing of success,
Proud, haughty, vain, and—truth to tell—
Chagrined at being foiled so well,
Impatient longer of restraint,
He plots a charge. He brings complaint
Against young Paul,—"as one attaint
With treason's odious, baleful blight,
In that he did conspire and write
To certain hostile powers of France,

In which he made so bold advance
As to betray into their hands
The Duke's fair towns and fertile lands,
Such as within that province lay. * * *
Further, deponent doth not say."

On this grave charge, or pretense feigned,
Young Paul was seized, and soon arraigned.
Nor were there wanting means to prove
The charges cited as above.
'Tis only when men first begin
Those half-reluctant steps in sin,
They shudder and draw, doubting, back,
While conscience puts them on the rack.
But Claude had nothing now to do
With conscience, nor with justice, too;
Nor recked he, though Paul lost his life,
So it secured his fair, young wife
Safe in his power,—though ruined—lost,
'Twere pleasure cheap at any cost.
So base is man, when steeped in crime.
Not all the prayers and tears of Time
Could cleanse away that guilty stain
And make his soul re-live again.

Confined within a dungeon cell,
Condemned to death!—ah, who can tell
The thoughts that burn within Paul's brain;—
What fearful throes of mental pain
Must now that anguished soul sustain!
Condemned a traitor's doom to die,
And in a felon's grave to lie;
To be cut off in Nature's prime,
Yet free from any guilt or crime;
To be despised, abhorred, reviled,
Yet innocent as any child;

No more behold the earth and sky,
But feel the headsman's axe and—die!
No more to breathe the breath of life,—
No more to greet his loving wife,—
No more return her fond caress,—
Or feel the rapture of her kiss!
Oh! is there not a God above,
Who rules with justice, mercy, love?
Can He permit such things to be,
Nor set aside th' unjust decree?

Sapphira, wild, distraught with grief,
In vain, in prayer did seek relief.
Nor Virgin Mary nor the saints
Responded to her sad complaints.
The very gates of Heaven seemed closed,
And every power to her opposed.
Bereft of hope in heavenly aid
She, promptings of despair, obeyed—
For other refuge had she none—
And that a dangerous, doubtful one.
Yet might not *he* some pity show
For woman's love, despair, and woe?
Might he not lean to mercy's side
When he her grief and tears espied?
She would, at least, the effort make—
What would she not, for Paul's dear sake?—
Although it led her to the stake
And doomed her body to be burned;
Although repulsed, reviled, and spurned.
So true is love in woman's breast,
When by malignant wrongs oppressed,
There's naught she would not do or dare
So that it may her loved one spare!

All trembling, fearful, and dismayed,
Attended by her waiting-maid,
She, her reluctant steps, constrained
To test whate'er of hope remained,
And to the Governor's house repaired,
For almost any fate prepared.
Not unexpected was this call
To Claude, who, in the audience hall,
Awaited with dissembled pride
The presence of this faithful bride.
She was to him most welcome guest,
For whom he long had been in quest;
Yet, he assumed sincere surprise,
Well suited to insure disguise
In those foul schemes of dark intent,
On which his sinful mind was bent.
Ere he arose, his guest to greet,
The suppliant was at his feet.
Her downcast look and modest grace,
Her earnest air and tearful face,
Bespoke the agony she felt,—
As on the marble floor she knelt
And pled—as only woman can—
Before this recreant, hardened man.
Thus, humble, abject, did she kneel
To make one desperate, last appeal;
Besought in accents of despair,
That he in mercy yet would spare
The one on whom her soul relied—
The husband of her love and pride—
Who never yet in place or time
Had plotted treason, wrong, or crime;
But ever to his Prince and land
Was loyal, both in heart and hand;
Invoking Heaven's avenging ruth
If she spoke aught but words of truth.

Appeal for mercy so intent
Might make a heart of stone relent.
But Claude's was made of baser stuff;
His feelings met with no rebuff.
With air of sternness and command,
He bade her rise, while in his hand
He held a letter, duly signed
In Paul's own name (forged as a blind
To cover up and screen from view
The work there was in hand to do.)
Then, in a voice, distinct and clear,
That all within the hall might hear:
"Madame, this letter, as you see,
With your appeal does not agree.
Dost recognize that hand and name?
Read how its purport puts to shame
Your well-wrought tale and cunning plea.
Could one write that and loyal be?
If you our clemency would crave—
If from his doom, your husband save—
Then be prepared, when I shall send,
In private audience to attend.
There, truthfully, to me disclose
The names and number of our foes,
Who with your husband joined in league
For treason's wiles and dark intrigue.
Full well we know his love and pride
For you, his own fond wife and bride,
Would not permit from you to hide
All knowledge of his plans and friends
And means by which to reach his ends."
He ceased to speak and then withdrew,—
His public audience now was through.

Sapphira stood in blank dismay,
Not knowing what to do or say.
What meant this man of power and might?

Or could it be she heard aright?
She knew no plans of dark intrigue,
Accomplices, or treason's league.
But this, in spite of all, she knew,
That Paul was loyal, faithful, true.
Though on her Claude should turn his back,
E'en though he put her on the rack,
And though the world might scorn and hate,
She never would this truth abate.

And was there, then, no hope for Paul,
Condemned, imprisoned, soon to fall
The victim of a fiendish plot,
Devised by Nature's foulest blot?
While thus she questioned and thought o'er
The strange proceedings gone before,
A messenger brought word to her,
That Claude was ready to confer
In private audience on the case.
If she would by her presence grace
The well-appointed trysting place,
He would conduct and show the way—
For Claude would suffer no delay.
Not knowing what to do or think,
She shuddered, as one on a brink;
In front, a fearful gulf, and yet,
Behind by cruel foes beset.
On either side, before, behind,
Some ray of hope she seeks to find—
But only sees Time's threat'ning finger
Which warns her not to pause or linger.
Thus, cruel Fate drives every soul,
Relentless, to its doom and goal!
One thought of Paul flamed through her brain—
Helpless and sad, he'd soon be slain
Unless through her a pardon came.

She must not pause, though blush of shame
Suffused her cheek and mantled high.
She could not,—would not, let him die!

With trembling step she followed on,
And soon with Claude was left alone.
The servant knew to keep his place,
Nor linger near or show his face,
When matters and affairs of state
Were by his master in debate.
Claude now discarded all disguise,
As well assured of his fair prize.
The bird, at last, was in the snare
He had prepared with so much care.
Dissimulation now could play
No further part—would but delay.
The bird, though caught, might flutter still,
Hence, should be tamed by his strong will.
Claude now became the suppliant,
And on his passion made descant,
While rallying in a merry strain,
His desperate love and amorous pain;
He begged, with earnest suit and bold,
She would consent, nor more withhold
From him her confidence and love,
For which so ardently he strove.

Sapphira, frightened, shocked, dismayed,
Did wring her hands; she wept, she prayed;
Besought in accents of despair,
He would, in generous pity, spare,
Nor by dishonor seek to blight
Her virtue—woman's dearest right—
Yet, all her pleading but inflamed
His savage appetite untamed.
He signified, in plainest phrase,

She need no longer hope to gaze
On Paul alive, unless consent
She would accord ere day was spent.
Thus, in her power he left Paul's fate;
She must decide, ere yet too late.
Though innocent of any crime,
Paul's doom was sealed. Unless in time
She would accede to his design,
All further hope she must resign.
The thought of Paul, imprisoned, lost,
If not redeemed at virtue's cost,
Was agony too great to bear.
She fell, with shriek of wild despair,—
Sense, consciousness, and reason gone,
Like pulseless beauty turned to stone.
When flower that bends before the blast
Can bend no more, it breaks at last!

When sense returned in some degree,
She wildly stared, as if to see
And realize where she could be.
All seemed so odd, so strange, confused,—
Unlike to what she had been used.
Or was it after all a dream
In which things are not what they seem?
Whose face confronts her? God! 'tis he!
And now the dread reality
Breaks on her dizzy brain,—but brings
No balm for all its poisoned stings.

Claude, with exultant smile, addressed
His fair young victim so distressed
In lightly bantering mood and strain,
As if to mock her grief and pain;—
In tones of gallantry and love,
Her charms commended, as above

Comparison with other flames
'Mong all the gay and lovely dames,
It was his rare good luck to know,
Whether in station high or low;—
Gaily confessed his guilt and shame
As feat too light to merit blame,
But rather, one, of which, at most,
A roué gay might choose to boast.
He hoped in future she would prove
Somewhat less coy, less shy, in love;
That he would often hope to greet
His fair young mistress, loving, sweet.
He bade her then to go and see
Her husband Paul, and set him free,—
But added: "I have taken care
Him needless jealousy to spare;—
Nor will he likely interfere
In anything that he may hear;—
Nor will he place restraint or ban
Upon my well-concerted plan
For future assignations, when
I may appoint to meet again."
These boding words smote on her ear,
As warning what she had to fear,
But did not force from her a tear.
Like Niobé, her grief repressed,
Too great for utterance, in her breast,
No word nor gesture did she deign,
Expressive of her mental pain.

She passed from out Claude's presence there,
Impassive, even to despair!
She hastened to the gaol to find
The fear that occupied her mind
Was but too true—his prison gate
Stood open! She had come too late!

"Too late" implies relentless doom—
"Too late" is echoed from the tomb.
By Claude's command, the fatal blow
Was struck, which laid Paul's young life low
But spared, in cruelty, the wife
Her ruined, blighted, hopeless life.
In one short day—one hour of time—
How much is marred by guilt and crime!
Life's current stopped, or turned aside
From all its joys of hope and pride.
Eternity, alone, may show
Crime's blackness of despair and woe!
This consummation, now, of ill
Was hers to bear and suffer still.
She dared not risk eternal hate,
By taking in her hands, her fate.
She would not add that guilty stain,
And plunge her soul in endless pain;
But, rather, by her trust in Heaven,
Would hope at last to be forgiven,
And leave to its avenging wrath
The monster who beset her path.

She hastened to her own abode—
Nor sign of fear or anger showed.
And no observer would have guessed
The storm that raged within her breast.
She refuge took within that home
Where naught before but joy had come.
No footstep sounds within its halls
To wake an echo from its walls.
Deserted now is every room
And shrouded in a silent gloom.
Throughout that long and mournful night,
From window shone but one faint light.
Sapphira, in her closet there,

On bended knee, in earnest prayer,
Committed her sad case to Him—
The avenger of all crime and sin.

Then, ere the morn began to break,
Or early risers were awake,
Relying on her own strong will,
Her righteous cause,—and better still—
On Him, who never fails to show
A balm for every wound and woe,
She passed from out that home and door,—
Alas, for her 'twas home no more.
As wishing to avoid report,
In private journeyed she to Court.
Her queenly form and gracious air,
Her grace and wondrous beauty rare,
To which her noble sorrow lent
Still added charms, most grandly blent,
Gained ready passport to the Duke.
Nor did she meet with one rebuke
From guard or courtier, by the way,—
Oft willing to oppose delay.
But every one who saw her face
Was only eager to give place,
And strove as thereby to evince
Some welcome service to his Prince;
For well he saw, the boon, or plea,
Or suit for grace or charity,
Preferred by suppliant such as she,
Would never unrequited be.
Whate'er she sought at Charles' hand
Would gain assent and his command.

When, in the royal presence, came
This injured wife and modest dame,
With courtly grace and self-command,
She knelt and kissed his proffered hand;

Then, as she rose at his behest,
Her Prince and Sovereign thus addressed:—
"Oh, mighty Charles, in me behold
A wretch undone, although so bold
As in thy presence here to stand
Or kneel and kiss thy royal hand.
Once, life to me was sweet and bright,
But now, a weary curse,—a blight.
Yet, have I ever spent my days
In innocence and virtue's ways.
I may not now appear so bold,
As in thy presence to unfold
My tale of sorrow, wrongs, and shame,
And by whose guilt my ruin came;
Yet in this paper thou may'st see
Recital of my injury.
Although not in thy royal power
To give me back one happy hour,—
To life, to hope, to love restore
A husband I shall see no more,
Yet, if it be not wrong to seek
Protection for the injured, weak,
Distressed, and helpless, of a King—
Then I appeal to thee,—and bring
Most ample matter for the Duke,—
Wrongs to avenge, and crime rebuke,
Committed in thine own fair land,
By cruel power and impious hand.
If my appeal be not in vain,
My Prince can clear my name from stain
And add, thereby, in virtue's name,
One laurel more to his just fame.
No other boon than this I crave."
Then, to the Duke, her packet gave,
Wherein was truthfully portrayed
Her injuries and need of aid.

The Duke, unable yet to see
The portent of this mystery,
Did not conceal his great concern
And eagerness, the facts to learn.
Her simple, truthful, strong appeal
Enlisted his most earnest zeal.
Ere he had read the paper through,
He was convinced 'twas but too true;
Which raised emotions in his breast,
That could not lightly be suppressed—
Pity for her, so faithful, true,
And yet so wronged and injured, too.
Just indignation now was raised
'Gainst him so often he had praised;
For, jealous of his own good name,
His officers must be the same.
Nor would he suffer honor's laws,
Whate'er the pretext or the cause,
To be infringed, abjured, defied,
Corrupted, scorned, or set aside.
No greater insult could he feel
Than wrong against his subject's weal;
His greatest pride and hope, to see
Their welfare and prosperity.

"Madame, your story doth appear
To me most strange, though plain and clear.
Such monstrous guilt as here abounds
Shocks every sense, belief confounds.
And, since I can not doubt your word,
I will such means and power accord,
As shall the guilty wretch expose,
Whose impious act hath dared oppose
And set at naught the laws of Heaven,
And barred all hope to be forgiven.
Nor, will I suffer ruthless shame,

To bring dishonor on my name,
Or desecrate with guilty hand
The virtuous homes of our fair land,
While I have means, the will, and time,
To shield the weak and punish crime.
Be pleased, fair lady, to accede,
And grant your presence when we need
Of you such proofs and timely aid
As are befitting to be made
That we may clear your husband's name,
To you restore your own fair fame.
Until such time, by my request,
You will remain our royal guest."

Ere many days and nights were spent,
The Lord High Constable was sent
With writ and strict command "to bring
Forthwith, before the Court and King,
Vi et armis—Claude Rhynsault,
Ci-devant soldier from Anhalt,
As well, for some time heretofore
Of Zélande, now the Governor."

When Claude was brought before the Court,
The Duke inquired what good report
The Governor was pleased to bring,
As greeting to his Prince and King?
How prospered all his subjects there?
And had he met good cheer and fare?
Were any subjects discontent
With officers or government?
Thus, covertly Charles sought to find
The disposition of his mind,
Nor would in any way allude
To what concerned his turpitude.
But Claude, suspicious and alarmed,

Was not so easily disarmed;
For wary, cautious, and expert,
He thought it best not to revert
To such affairs as well might lead
The Duke to question of his deed—
(Not knowing that the Duke knew aught
About this crime that had been wrought—
Nor did he know for what resort
He had been thus hailed into Court.)
So, in a lively, cheerful strain,
He said of naught could he complain;
It gave him pleasure to relate
Affairs were prosperous in his state.
His subjects had, with one accord,
Been loyal both in deed and word;
Nor had he met with one complaint—
So far as he had been acquaint—
Nor other than good will and cheer
From every subject, far and near.

The Duke, advised of this report,
Sent for Sapphira into Court.
According to his will and care,
The Council were already there.
When she appeared, Claude, at a glance,
Perceived he neither could advance
Nor yet recede from what he'd said
Ere she was in the presence led.
Confounded by this injured dame,
His color wavered—went and came.
So quickly guilt condemns, confounds,
When forced within the narrow bounds
Where virtue, justice, truth, unite
T'assert their majesty and might.

Claude saw he was betrayed, undone,
Might never see another sun,

Unless he could the Duke invoke,
By some shrewd, cunning master-stroke,
To grant him pardon and forgive,
In trust a better life he'd live.
Though well he knew his master's mind
Was firm, to justice e'er inclined,
Yet, often had he seen Charles show
Most signal mercy to a foe.
His former love and high regard
Might serve Claude now to play his card,
With such success as might abate
His master's vengeance ere too late.
Of every other hope bereft,
This seemed his only chance now left.
The Duke, though satisfied before,
Resolved to test his guilt still more.
Facing the trembling Governor,
He asked him had he ever met
So fair a dame in Zélande yet?
Or, if he recognized, or knew
The lady who stood there in view?
Recovered from his first surprise,
Claude now unable to disguise,
Confessed his guilt, but added still,
If it should meet the Duke's good will,
As some atonement for his crime,
He would, at stated place and time,
Take this same woman for his wife;
Would lead henceforth a better life;
And every day, and every hour,
So far as might be in his power,
Make reparation for the wrong,
So long his days God would prolong.

The Duke, appearing well content
With this proposal, gave consent,

Approved the bans, and sent for priest
To solemnize the wedding-feast.
Himself, as guardian, gave away
The sorrowing bride without delay.
This solemn ceremony through,
Without array, or more ado,
The Duke then turned to Claude and said:—
"Thus far, authority, and dread,
The fear of death, the love of life,
Determined you to take to wife
This lady, whom your wrongs and crime
Have made to suffer for all time.
I may not, therefore, be content
With your kind usage, and intent
Towards this lady, now allied
By ties of marriage as your bride,
Unless you freely will convey,
By deed of gift, this very day,
Your whole estate, both goods and lands,
Into this gentle lady's hands;
To take effect at your decease,
When your protective care shall cease.
This further proof is needful still,
As guarantee of your good will."

The due performance of this act,
Was soon attested as a fact;
Of this, the Duke was witness, too,
Which left but little more to do.
So, turning to Sapphira now,
He, with serene, unclouded brow,
Addressed her briefly in these terms:—
"Madame, the truth your plea confirms.
Thus far your cause has prospered well,
In what has heretofore befell.
There yet remains, as it would seem,

One further act which, as I deem,
Concerns your happiness and fate,
As well the welfare of the state.
This added right I must accord,
And thus redeem my royal word.
It now remains for me to see
That you at once, in quiet, be
Put in possession of that dower
Your husband has, this very hour,
In token of the justice due,
Thus legally bestowed on you."
Then, turning to th' accused, he said:—
"Your crimes have forfeited your head.
Such mercy as to her you showed,
The same on you shall be bestowed.
The peace and welfare of the state,
Approve the justice of your fate—
'Tis needless more to question why;—
Your doom is sealed and you must die."

The headsman's axe soon closed the scene—
Our tale is ended, too, I ween.

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